EUROPE'S BEST PC LEISURE GUIDE
APRIL 1995 ● ISSUE 16 ● £4.99

PC POWER

CD

MELODY MAKERS

und advice to make
ur PC "one louder"!

What's so super about Super VGA?
See page 40

DOUBLE CD EDITION!

OVER 800 MEGABYTES OF SOFTWARE!
Samplertude Pro Procyon
Steinberg Media Maestro
Neobook Phantom Screen Saver

GAMES FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE:

Discworld Descent Jungle Strike
Guilty Tower Assault SuperKarts
Daedalus Encounter NBA Live '95
Nick Faldo's Golf Slipstream 5000
ureau 13 CyClones Psycho Pinball
Battledrome Big Red Adventure
Simon the Sorceror II and more!

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PORTABLE POWER!
Four notebook PCs tested on P84

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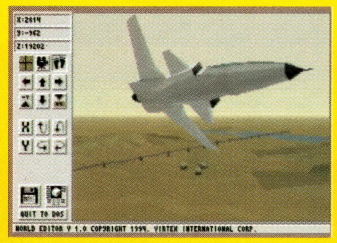

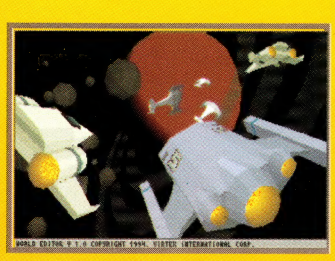

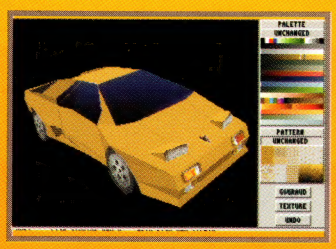

Want to write a 3D game?

If you've ever tried doing fast realtime 3D graphics on a PC you'll know how difficult it is. Even the best programmers give up when they see the brillia graphics in such games as Epic, TFX and Inferno. Imagine having access to t technology that made these games possible. Imagine a library of 3D graphics functions you can use from your favourite C compiler, Pascal or BASIC. Imagi a set of functions so powerful that you needn't know anything about 3D graphi to make fighter planes soar through the sky or send cars screaming down the road. This is 3D-Ware, the worlds fastest PC-based Virtual Reality Developme Kit. Pre-production versions of the 3D library were used in the development of mega bestsellers like TFX and the brand new Inferno. The current version of 3D-Ware is already in use worldwide by amateurs and professionals alike.

The 3D-Ware functions are easy to understand and extremely easy to u so instant results are within everybodys reach. To make life even easier the 3D-Ware package contains various applications, tools and filters, and 500+ professionally designed shapes from rocks to rocketships. 3D graphics has ne

Tech Specs

- Resolution up to 320x400 in 256 colours ❑
- 170+ function 3D graphics library ❑
- Up to 70 frames/sec ❑
- Multiple viewports ❑
- Flat shaded polygon filling ❑
- Patterned polygon filling ❑
- Gouraud shading* ❑
- Sphere drawing ❑
- Patterned line drawing ❑
- ❑ Full manual with 170+ tested examples
- ❑ Text in numerous fonts and sizes
- ❑ Autoscaling sprites*
- ❑ Collision detection
- ❑ Ultra-fast integer maths
- ❑ 500+ shapes included
- ❑ Texture mapping*
- ❑ Dot plotting
- ❑ Automatic shape management

* Professional edition only

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Professional edition	£249.00 †

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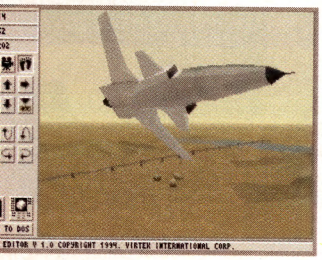

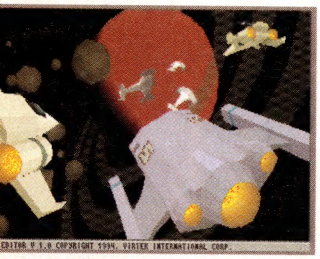

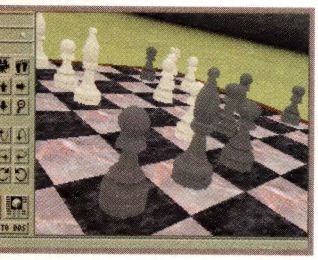

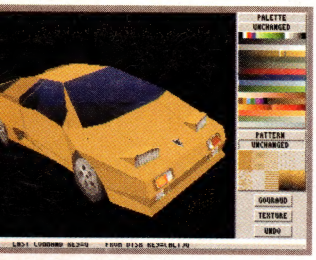

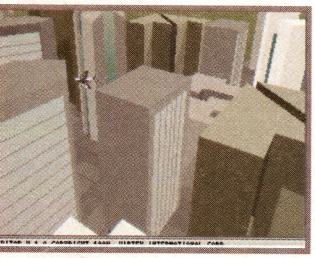

Virtek and has teamed up with PC-Power to bring you a unique special offer...

SPECIAL OFFER

For a limited time only Virtek are offering readers of PC-Power a special offer on the 3D-Ware package. 3D-Ware is an incredibly fast, easy to use 3D graphics library that allows you to create your own 3D game or Virtual Reality application using your own favourite C compiler. 3D-Ware comes complete with a suite of utility programs including a World Editor, Shape Compiler, a Palette Editor and a Shape Painter.

The normal price of 3D-Ware is £99 for the Personal Edition and £249 for the Professional Edition. Virtek is offering you the Personal Edition for £79 and the Professional Edition for £199.

Order your copy **NOW** by completing the order form below and sending it to Virtek at:

PC-Power Special Promotion, Virtek International, Barclay House, 35 Whitworth Street West, Manchester, England, M1 5NG.

Virtek can be contacted via email at: **sales@virtek.com**
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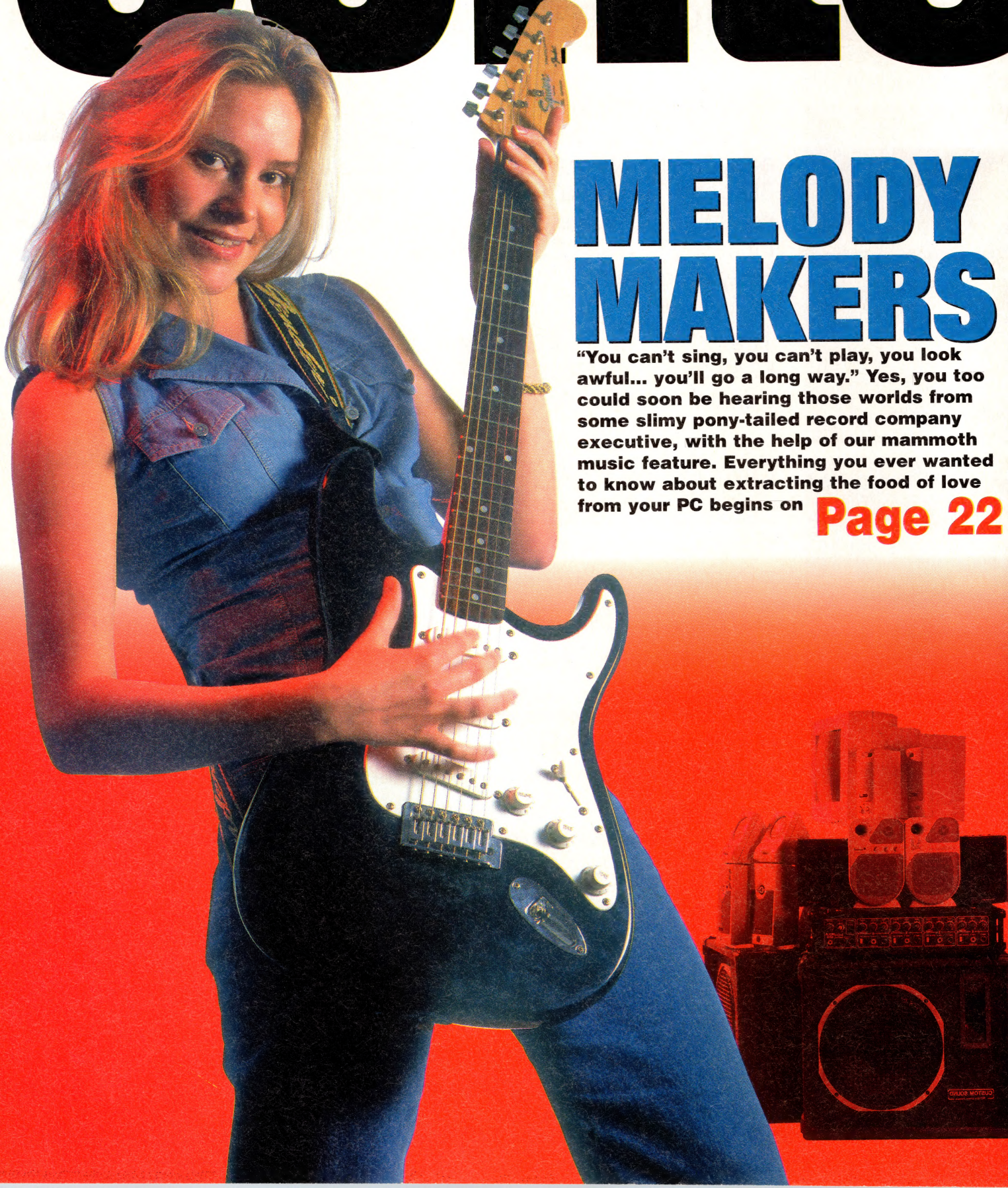

MELODY MAKERS

"You can't sing, you can't play, you look awful... you'll go a long way." Yes, you too could soon be hearing those worlds from some slimy pony-tailed record company executive, with the help of our mammoth music feature. Everything you ever wanted to know about extracting the food of love from your PC begins on Page 22

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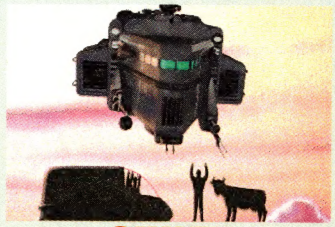
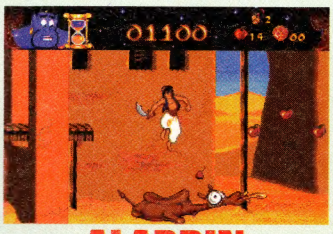
On this month's coverdisks...

Playable demo of *Dark Forces*!

SUPERKARTS
A fantastic playable demo of Virgin's transglobal kart-racing extravaganza!



GUILTY
Sleaze, action and sexual innuendo in this playable demo of Psygnosis' adventure.



ALADDIN
Now you can 'be' the baggy-trousered Tom Cruise lookalike in this playable demo!

3D STUDIO 4
Another amazing demo, this time showing you how to create and render objects!

PLUS TWO FREE AUDIO TRACKS!

instant access

PAY-AS-YOU-PLAY VERSIONS OF:
MICROSOFT WORKS
MICROSOFT PUBLISHER

SUPERKARTS

Playable demo of Virgin's kartular drive-a-thon!

Coverdisks

SuperKarts

VIRGIN

INSTALLATION

To install *SuperKarts*, put the cover disk in your floppy drive, then type the drive letter followed by "INSTALL" e.g. "A:INSTALL". When installation is finished, enter the 'C' drive and type "CD \KART" followed by "KART" to run the game.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

At last, a top-notch karting game for the PC. This exhilarating one track demo throws you into a hair-raising three lap mêlée around London's docklands. Jostle for position against seven other ruthless drivers and let that turbo rip. See page 56 for full review.

CONTROLS

A – Accelerate. **Z** – Brake. **Alt** – Reverse. **Space** – Turbo. **Right arrow** – Turn right. **Left arrow** – Turn left. **F5/F6** – Adjust viewing angle. **F7/F8** – Resize kart.

Coverdisk 1

To enter the cover disk menu, first type the drive letter of your CD-ROM drive at the DOS prompt (eg D:), then type PCPOWER.

Dark Forces

INSTALLATION

Select the Install Dark Forces Playable Demo option from the menu system, the game will then be installed to the C drive in a directory called DF. To play the game, enter the C:\DF directory, then type DF. To configure the game for your sound card, type IMUSE.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Star Wars meets *Doom*. You are a former member of the Empire turned mercenary, and are now fighting for the Rebel Alliance (and for money). Having infiltrated deep into plastic helmet territory, your immediate task is to blow away those camp looking stormtroopers using your available weaponry, namely a fast gun and a slow gun.

CONTROLS

Cursor keys – Move. **Ctrl** – Fire. **Alt** – Strafe. **X** – Jump. **C** – Crouch. **Number keys** – Select weapon.

SuperKarts

INSTALLATION

Select the Install SuperKarts Playable Demo option from the menu system, the game will then be installed to the C drive in a directory called KART. To play the game, enter the C:\KART directory, then type KART.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

At last, a top-notch karting game for the PC. This exhilarating one track demo throws you into a hair-raising three lap mêlée around London's docklands. Jostle for position against seven other ruthless drivers and let that turbo rip. See page 56 for full review.

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Aladdin

INSTALLATION

Select the Install Aladdin Playable Demo option from the menu system, the game will then be installed to the C drive in a directory called ALADDIN. To play the game, enter the C:\ALADDIN directory, then type ALADDIN.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Based on the Disney cartoon, this is the first level of a lively platform game in which you play the fabled street urchin. Leap about, collect apples and throw them at all and sundry. Alternatively, carve them up with your swishing scimitar. Look out for the spitting camel!

CONTROLS

Left arrow – Go left. **Right arrow** – Go right. **Up arrow** – Look up. **Down arrow** – Crouch. **Ctrl** – Slash. **Alt** – Throw. **Space** – Jump. **P** – Pause.

Guilty

INSTALLATION

Select the Install Guilty Playable Demo option from the menu system, the game will then be installed to the C drive in a directory called GUILTY. To play the game, enter the C:\GUILTY directory, then type GUILTY. To configure the game to your sound card, enter the directory and type SETUP.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Space adventure revolving around tenuous male prisoner/female cop relationship as they attempt to escape from a grim ice planet. You can elect to play as Jack T. Ladd, intergalactic scoundrel or Ysanne Andropath, his hard-faced captor. See page 68 for full review.

CONTROLS

Mouse driven. **Right button** – Select. **Left button** – Use.

5th Fleet

INSTALLATION

Select the Install 5th Fleet Playable Demo option from the menu system, the game will then be installed to the C drive in a directory

called 5THFLEET. To play the game, enter the C:\5THFLEET directory, then type FLEET.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
War. It's war! For budding stormin' Normans everywhere, this war simulator puts you in charge of a huge amount of killing machines, including air force and navy. You control proceedings from the centre of operations. Select planes, ships and submarines to send into the enemy's mouth like some crazy Trojan.

CONTROLS
Mouse driven.

Virtua Chess

INSTALLATION
Select the Install VirtuaChess 21-Move Demo option from the menu system, the game will then be installed to the C drive in a directory called VCHESS. To play the game, enter the C:\VCHESS directory, then type VCHESS1. If the mouse does not appear to work properly during play, try running VCHESS2 instead.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
Unsurprisingly, it's about chess. Surprisingly, it's French. The culmination of ten years of artificial intelligence, this is the Mother of all computer chess games. Our 21-move demo gives you a chance to experience its virtual delights.

CONTROLS
Mouse driven.

Xplora1

INSTALLATION
Select the Install Xplora1 Interactive Demo option from the menu system, the installation program will then automatically launch windows and install the demo.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
A fascinating insight into the lavish lifestyle of one of Britain's all-time Rock Gods. This fully interactive demo lets you actually be Peter Gabriel, doyen of ground-breaking videos and seminal pomp-rock. Spend time being worthy and noncing around with mixing desks. What more could you ask?

CONTROLS
Mouse driven.

Goal 94

INSTALLATION
Select the Install Goal Shareware Football Management Game option from the menu system, the game will then be installed to the C drive in a directory called GOAL. To play the game, enter the C:\GOAL directory, then type GOAL94.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
A World Cup management game with a host of statistics and options. There are crucial decisions to be made as you attempt to guide your team towards the ultimate footballing prize. When you're happy with your side, sit back and marvel at the full match action.

CONTROLS
Cursor keys.

Dominus

INSTALLATION
Select the Install Dominus Playable Demo option from the menu system, the game will then be installed to the C drive in a directory called DOM. To play the game, enter the C:\DOM directory, then type DOM. To configure the game for your sound card, type INSTALL.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
Medieval fantasy battle strategy. Fend off your enemies by deploying an army of monsters which you can also pick & mix to make them even more evil. Other tricks up your sleeve include the setting of traps and the casting of magic spells.

CONTROLS
Mouse driven.

Flight Commander 2

INSTALLATION
Select the Install Flight Commander 2 Playable Demo option from the menu system, the game will then be installed to the C drive in a directory called FC2. To play the game, enter the C:\FC2 directory, then type WIN FC to launch Windows and run the Flight Commander 2 demo.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
This is a purely strategic military flight simulator which runs in Windows. You must study the radar to pre-empt enemy attacks and also lock on to and destroy various targets.

CONTROLS
Mouse driven.

JustLotto

INSTALLATION
Select the Install JustLotto Playable Demo option from the menu system, the game will then be installed to the C drive in a directory called JUSTLOTO. To play the game, enter the C:\JUSTLOTO directory, then type WIN GJL to launch Windows and run the JustLotto demo.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
Windows demo of Lottery program. *JustLotto* goes through an intricate process of producing six numbers that are no more likely to win the National Lottery than any other six numbers. Or are they? (If you win, remember where you got the program...)

CONTROLS
Mouse driven.

Red Nose Comic Relief Screen Saver

INSTALLATION
Select the Install Comic Relief Screen Saver option from the menu system, the files required for the screen saver will then be placed in a directory called C:\REDNOSE. Before the program can be run though, you must register the product over the telephone or through the post, this costs £7.99 and full instructions on how to do so are displayed when the installation is complete.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
Pay-as-you-view screen saver, with all proceeds to charidee. Comic relief is a wholly owned subsidiary of Charity Projects, Registered Charity Number 356628.

CONTROLS
Cash driven. Pledge money to reveal the many jokes, 65 screen savers and silly games it contains.

Arts & Letters Express

INSTALLATION
To install the Arts and Letters Express Guided Tour and Arts And Letters Draw, select the Install Arts and Letters Express Demo option from the menu system, then Windows will launch automatically into the installation program. This has the added bonus of adding Microsoft Video for Windows capability to your machine.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
Test-drive version of this excellent Windows graphic design and publishing program, with an additional slide show, guided tour, user's guide and drawing package with over 400 free clip-art images.

CONTROLS
Mouse driven.

Coverdisk 2

To enter the cover disk menu, first type the drive letter of your CD-ROM drive at the DOS prompt (eg D:), then type PCPOWER.

3D Studio release 4 Guided Tour

INSTALLATION

Select the Install 3DS4 Guided Tour option from the menu system, the demo will then be installed to the C drive in a directory called 3DSDEMO. To view the demo, enter the C:\3DSDEMO directory, then type DEMO. If the guided tour causes display problems, try typing DEMO2 or DEMO3 instead.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Following up last month's slide-show demonstration, this demo takes you through the process of modelling and rendering 3-D objects.

Procyon Pro Demonstration

INSTALLATION

Select the Install Procyon Pro Demo option from the menu system, Windows will then automatically launch and run the installation utility.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

An almost fully-featured MIDI music composition program, reviewed in the technical section this month. This demo version gives you all of the music writing power of the full product, but will not let you save your work.

Samplitude Pro Demonstration

INSTALLATION

Select the Install Samplitude Demo option from the menu system, then run Windows. Select the FILE option from the Program Manager menu, then select NEW. Click on the button marked Program Group, then on OK. A requester will appear asking for a description and a group file name, ignore the description and type C:\SAMPLIT\SEKD.GRP as the group file name. Now click OK and a group will be added to your Windows desktop which contains the demo and a help file.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

A demonstration of the new sound sampling, sequencing and multimedia controlling software from the Dresden College of Electronic Sound Synthesis.

Steinberg MusicStation Demonstration

INSTALLATION

Select the Install Steinberg Demo option from the menu system, Windows will then automatically launch and run the installation utility.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

A package with similar goals to those of *Procyon Pro*, but *MusicStation* takes a different approach, plumping for a more MIDI-oriented program than the classical music notation used by most other PC music packages.

Media Maestro LE Demonstration

INSTALLATION

Select the Install Media Maestro Demo option from the menu system, Windows will then automatically launch and run the installation utility.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

A true multimedia package, *Media Maestro* is designed to let you assemble presentations for training, education or entertainment. It allows movie files, sound samples, text and graphic files to be arranged in any way you like.

NeoBook Shareware Electronic Publisher

INSTALLATION

Select the Install Neobook DOS Electronic Publisher option from the menu system, this will copy the required files to a directory called C:\NEOBOOK. Enter this directory, then type NEOBOOK to run the program.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

NeoBook claims to be a new approach to publishing. By using *NeoBook* to create pages of a document, then including them on a disk with the viewing software supplied, you can send electronic advertisements or magazines to customers without ever printing a page. Help supplied in text file NEOBOOK.DOC.

Visual Basic Runtime Library

INSTALLATION

Select the Install Visual Basic Runtime Library 300 option from the menu system, this will copy the required file to your Windows directory.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The *Visual Basic Runtime Library* is required if you wish to run many shareware programs. If any of the programs on this disk complain that they cannot find VBRUM300.DLL, then install this and all will be fine.

Graphic Display System 3.1

INSTALLATION

Select the Install Graphic Display System option from the menu system, this will copy the required files to a directory called C:\GDS. Enter this directory, then type GDS to run the program.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

This superb DOS package allows just about any type of image file to be displayed in seconds. It also allows conversion between most major file types and seems to work immediately on almost all monitors and video cards.

Graphic Developer with Slideshow

INSTALLATION

Select the Install Graphic Developer with Slideshow option from the menu system, this will automatically launch Windows and run the installation program.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Advanced graphic manipulation program supporting filters, contrast and lighting functions, comprehensive lighting tools and a handy slideshow manager.

WWPlus

INSTALLATION

Select the Install WWPlus option from the menu system, this will automatically launch Windows and run the installation program.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

A wallpaper manager for Windows which allows you to arrange your wallpapers and screensavers in sequential lists or have them randomly selected to add a bit of variety to your desktop.

Phantom Screen Savers

INSTALLATION

Select the Install Phantom Screen Savers for DOS option from the menu system. When the screen pauses, press any key. This will install all files into a directory called PHANSCRN on your C drive. To run the screensaver, enter the C:\PHANSCRN directory and type PHANTOM, then either wait for around 60 seconds or type Control-M to activate.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

A wallpaper manager for DOS, it allows you to select one from the many animated savers provided. Help available in PHANTOM.DOC.

StupenDOS

INSTALLATION

Select the Install StupenDOS option from the menu system, this will copy all necessary files into a directory called C:\SD. To run the program, enter this directory and type SD.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

This is a productivity tool for DOS which allows files and directories to be controlled through the mouse, meaning that the whole process is greatly speeded up.

ZipDisk

INSTALLATION

Select the Install ZipDisk option from the menu system, then run Windows. Select the FILE option from the Program Manager menu, then select NEW. Click on the button marked Program Group, then on OK. A requester will appear asking for a description and a group file name, ignore the description and type C:\ZIPDISK\ZIPDISK.GRP as the group file name. Now click OK and a group will be added to your Windows desktop.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

An on-line compression system for Windows. Like *Doublespace*, this program compresses areas of your hard disk, but unlike *Doublespace*, this program only runs under Windows and uses the industry standard ZIP format for its files. This is a great way to save hard disk space.

WhackerTracker

INSTALLATION

Select the Install WhackerTracker option from the menu system, this will copy all necessary files into a directory called C:\WHACKER. To run the program, enter this directory and type WHACKER.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Once upon a time (about 18 months ago) there was a home computer called the Commodore Amiga, and it was pretty good at playing music. This program takes the most popular music format on the Amiga and allows you to play those files through your SoundBlaster.

FontBook

INSTALLATION

Select the Install FontBook option from the menu system, this will automatically launch Windows and run the installation program.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

A font manager for Windows. Preview, add and remove fonts from one easy-to-use interface.

NeoPaint

INSTALLATION

Select the Install NeoPaint option from the menu system, this will create a directory called C:\NEOPAINT. Enter this directory, then type NEOPAINT to run the program, or INSTALL to install printer drivers.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

A fully-featured paint package for DOS, extremely powerful and easy to use.

WhiteCat V2.0

INSTALLATION

Select the Install WhiteCat option from the menu system, this will create a directory called C:\WHITECAT. Enter this directory, then type WHITECAT to run the program.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

A text compression and cataloguing system. Allows vast archives of text to be stored on a single floppy disk in an organised way. Use it for newsletters, or help files.

Paper Planes Demonstration

INSTALLATION

Select the Install Paper Planes Demo option from the menu system, this will automatically launch Windows and run the installation program.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Interactive multimedia guide to creating paper planes. Step by step instructions to each of the planes covered.

WordPerfect Memphis Math Demonstration

INSTALLATION

Select the Install Memphis Math Demo option from the menu system, this will automatically launch Windows and run the installation program.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The latest in WordPerfect's Main Street line of home software, *Memphis Math – Treasure of the Tombs* is an edutainment package designed to teach young pupils the finer points of algebra, fractions and so on, all in the guise of an Egyptian puzzle game.

TWO FREE AUDIO TRACKS!

This month's second CD not only contains some 400Mb of programs, but it also boasts two records from a band named the 'Unsung Heroes'. To play the two tracks, named 'I got a hold on you' and 'So True', respectively, insert the second cover CD into any audio CD player, skip to track 2 (track 1 is full of programs which do not sound nice when played through a stereo) and play the CD.

If you want to get more information regarding the band's future plans and fan club, then write to:

Unsung Heroes, Fan Club and Information, c/o The Max Corporation Ltd, Yonder House, Bransgore, Dorset. BH23 8AR TEL/FAX: (01425) 672173

Both audio tracks are © Copyright 1995 Preece/Lockyer, all rights reserved. Unauthorised copying, lending or public performance strictly prohibited.

Rosie and Jim in "Jim gets the sneezes"

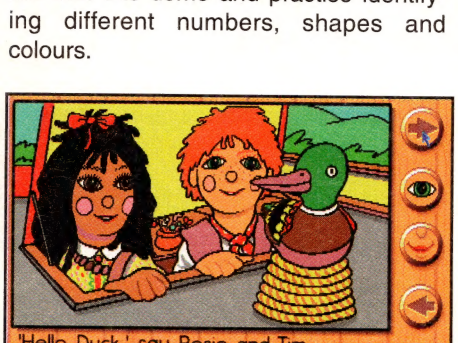
All the demos listed on this page are available for you to try straight from the cover disc. Follow the instructions on the previous page.

Children will love this demo featuring the two most famous rag dolls in the world. As well as a story with text and speech, children are encouraged to interact with this demo and practise identifying different numbers, shapes and colours.

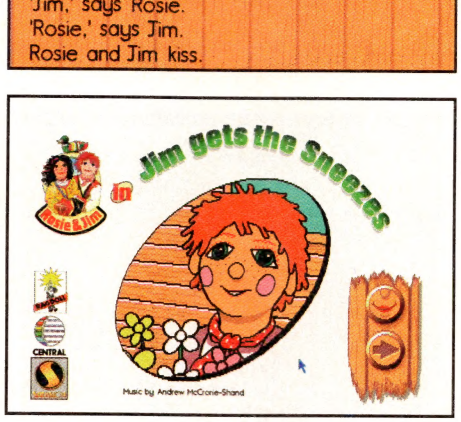
'Jim,' says Rosie.
'Rosie,' says Jim.
Rosie and Jim kiss.

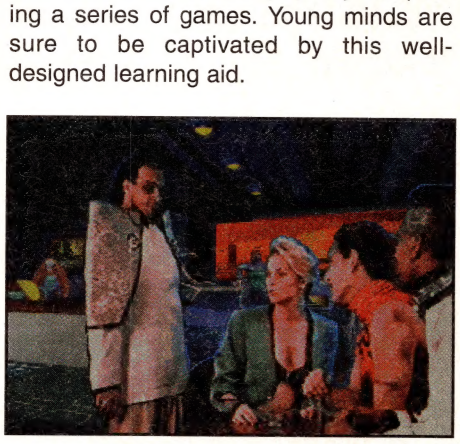
Rosie and Jim in "Duck Loses his Quack"

Another edutainment story for children presented by stars of lunchtime television Rosie and Jim. You must help the two rag dolls to find Duck's lost quack by completing a series of games. Young minds are sure to be captivated by this well-designed learning aid.



'Hello Duck,' say Rosie and Jim.
'Quack,' says Duck.

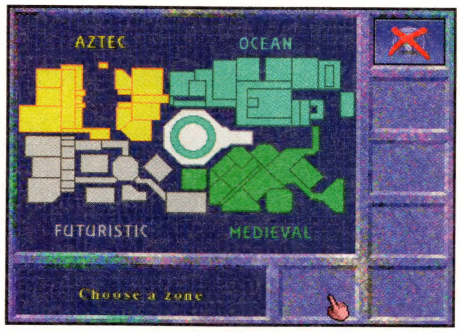


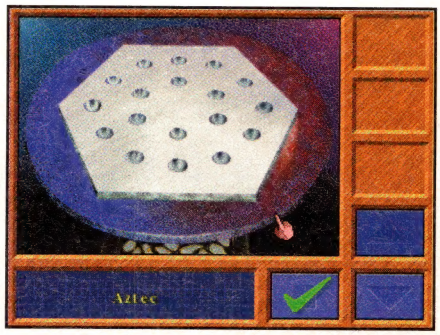


The Crystal Maze

Sherston Software give Channel Four's popular gameshow the edutainment treatment, albiet without Richard O'Brien or Edward Tudor-Pole. In this demo, you face the challenge of the Aztec Zone. Choose between physical, mental, skill and mystery games that will test your mind and co-ordination to the limits. While this is suitable for all ages, the difficulty of the games will make it too tough for the very young.

A mouse driver must be installed for DOS use.



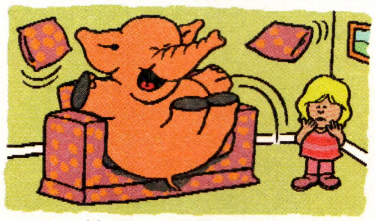


Naughty Stories + Free Story worth £12.86

These story books help your child to learn to read by narrating a story with the written version of the text displayed below colourful illustrations. If four stories are purchsed together, they can be bought for the price of three, and one naughty story (Edwina's Energetic Elephant) is supplied free on this month's cover disk.

To run the free Naughty Story, install it from the Instant Access Browser, then exit Windows. Now change directory to C:\ENWINAEL and type "GO" to run the story.

Controls for the story are :-
F1 – Index, F2 – Menu, F3 – Setup, F4 – Autoplay and Alt-X to exit to the DOS prompt.

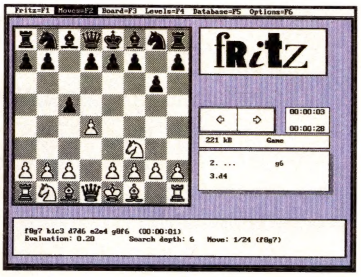


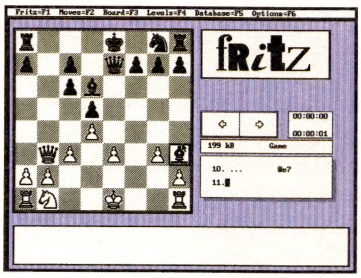
and bounced on the sofa.

The Crystal Rainforest

Learn about the importance of the rainforest and save the planet from the evil Cut and Run gang. This adventure is suitable for all ages and features size and shape recognition puzzles as well as teaching respect for the environment.

A simple point and click interface makes *The Crystal Rain Forest* fun for all age groups. Mouse driver must be installed for DOS.





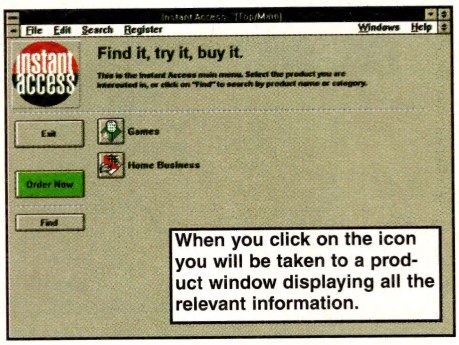
Fritz Chess

Become the next Nigel Short with this superb quality chess program. Fritz chess was used in the recent coverage of the Short-Kasparov match, making it an attractive choice to those who are serious about chess. The package allows every aspect of its display and board configuration to be user-defined, meaning that any situation can be simulated.

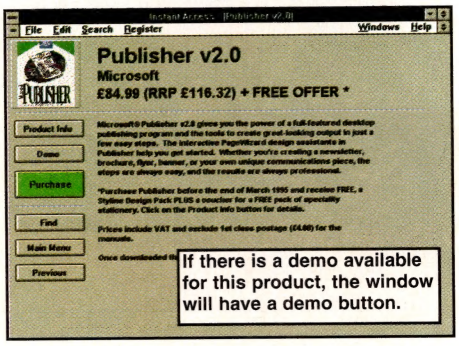
Instant access

PC POWER, in association with Instant Access, present you with the opportunity to buy Microsoft, Sherston and a range of other products at greatly reduced prices.

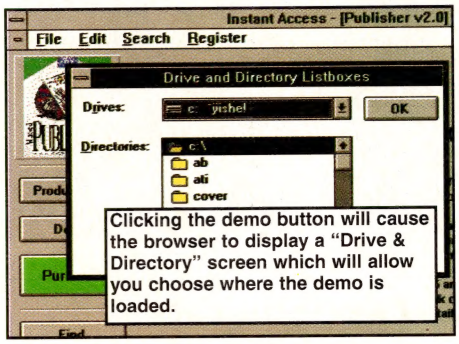
Install the Instant Access Browser from the PC POWER menu. Double click the Instant Access Browser icon to find a catalogue of demonstrations, trial and encrypted software.



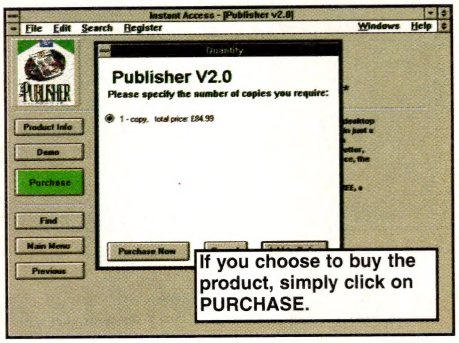
You will then be greeted by a menu of software categories, click on the category that interests you most. You may have to go through several category pages to reach a particular product.



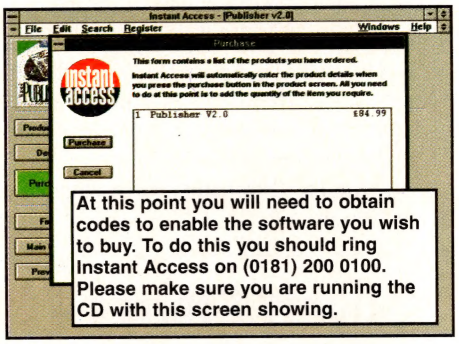
The window above shows a small picture of the product together with a brief description. For more information (system requirements, etc.) click the Product Info button.



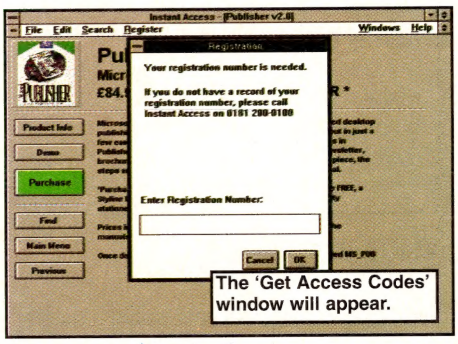
The "Drive & Directory" window will appear before any of the demos are installed to your computer. Some demos may not work from Windows, in which case you will need to quit to DOS to run them.



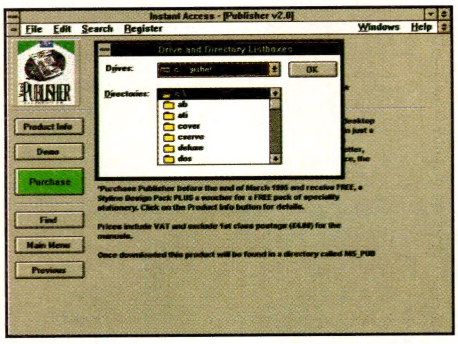
In the window above there are buttons which allow you to ADD TO AN ORDER or PURCHASE NOW. The ADD TO AN ORDER button allows you to return to the main menu to order more products.



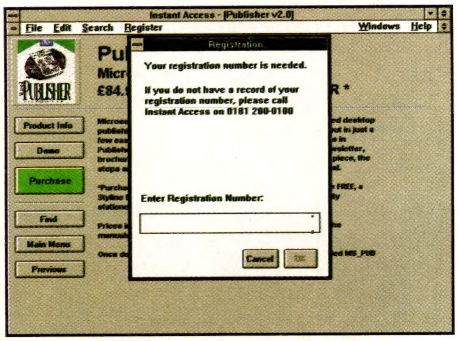
To obtain the access code that enables you to buy the software, call Instant Access on (0181) 200 0100 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). If you need a registration number, you will be given this when you call.



You will now be asked to read out the product code. In turn we will enter this code into our system and verify the product price. Once confirmed, the ACCESS CODE unlocking the software will be issued.

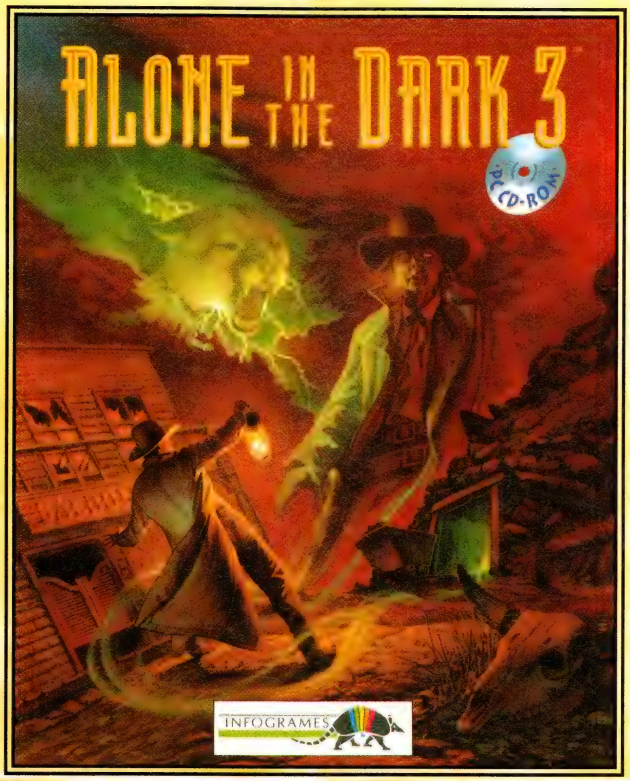


This allows you to select the destination drive and directory for the products that you are downloading from the CD.



You will now be able to click on the RETRIEVE button for the package to be downloaded automatically. If in doubt call Instant Access on (0181) 200 0100.

WANTED



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Microsoft Publisher

Publisher is a document design program that allows you to create graphic and text based documents.

The most helpful aspect of *Publisher* is its use of PageWizards that allow you to design pages to a standard layout. With the demonstration version you are restricted to designing news letters but with the full version available from Instant Access there are many types of PageWizard available from tape cassette covers to calendars

Cue Cards are also available to help you get to grips with *Publisher*. All the features associated with Desk Top Publishing packages are included within *Publisher*, found within an easy to use interface for text formatting, flexible layouts and page settings.

As with the Instant Access Microsoft *Works* package saving, help and tools utilities are not available in the demo version but with a phone call you can be granted full access to all features.

Microsoft *Publisher* costs only £84.99 + £4 postage, saving £30 on the RRP.

Microsoft Works

Why bother buying separate utilities for your PC when you can buy the lot in one go and be assured of easy interaction between any kind of document? If this sounds useful then Microsoft *Works* could be for you. Here on the CD we have the demo version that you can peruse and experiment with at your leisure.

If you decide that it's for you then a simple phone call with your credit card details will grant you instant access to the full package. Microsoft *Works for Windows* version 3.0 consists of a word processor, spreadsheet, database, drawing and communications module. All accessible from a single launcher program and all capable of interacting with each other.

In real terms this means that you can create a spreadsheet and incorporate in your letters or transfer results from it into your database.

The only restrictions on the demo version are a lack of document save, file conversion facilities from other packages, on-line help information and tools such as spell checker, thesaurus or row sorter. All these features become active if you purchase the full product through Instant Access.

If you decide you want Microsoft *Works for Windows* then you can pick it up for a bargain price of £109.99+ £4 postage, a saving of £30 on the RRP. Also if you order before the end of March 1995 you will receive Microsoft *Money* as a free added extra.

Microsoft Scenes

This free program installs a number of impressive screen savers to your hard drive.

They are absolutely free and would cost around £20 if bought normally.

Microsoft Golf v.2

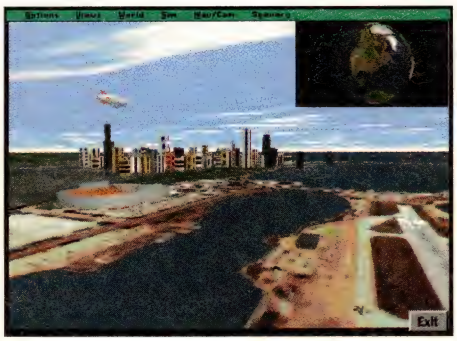
Microsoft Gold v.2 is arguably the best golf simulator available for the PC today. At these prices, golf fans will love it! Extra courses are also available to buy from this CD.

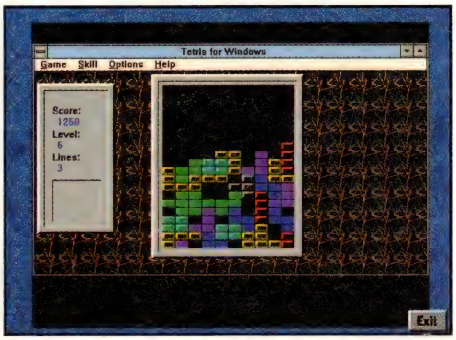
Flight Sim 5.0

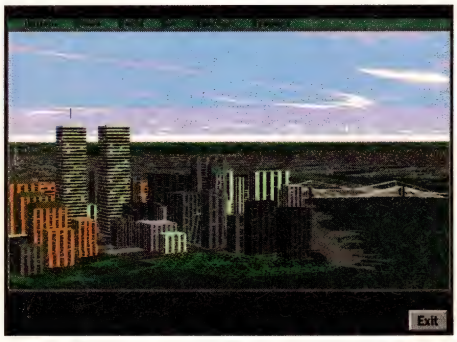
Take to the skies in Microsoft's legendary *Flight Sim 5.0* – would-be pilots can practise their flying on a PC. Scenery disks are also available to purchase from the CD.

Entertainment Pack

Featuring a number of board, card and puzzle games – Microsoft *Entertainment* is a fun package for all the family. There's even a version of *Tetris* on there!



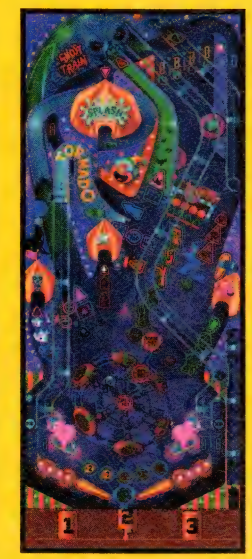




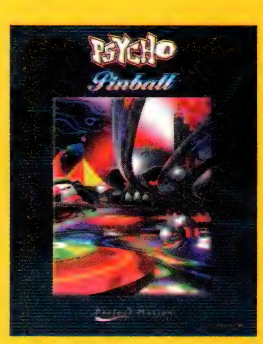
No. 4 in a series
THE ART OF PINBALL

PSYCHO Pinball™

Okay, speed freaks, try holding onto your stomach when your reflexes attempt to keep up with this non-stop, head - screaming ride of pure pinball adrenaline. This is PSYCHO PINBALL, so called 'cos it's bleedin' PSYCHOTIC. Get this inside y': Four all-new mind-blowing tables with over 100 features in each, rocking music, speech, 220+ real-play sound fx and - no slow down - 3-ball m-m-m- multi ball. AND we've done the whole thing with interactive vector reflection so, for once, you get a pinball game that actually feels RIGHT. Just don't blame us if you can't hack the pace.



A Perfect Motion SIMULATION



Codemasters

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Fact X Importance = News

PENTIUM OWNERS PEEVED!

Shock news for smug Pentium owners is that it is no longer the top-of-the-range processor for the PC! This month, manufacturing giant Intel, who currently supply 80% of the world's chip market, announced the P6, a successor to the Pentium.

The P6 runs at 133MHz, but is significantly faster than any other PC because it uses a RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computer) processor instead of the usual CISC (Complex Instruction Set Computer). The end result is that the new P6 (due to be shipped as early as this summer) will be 2-3 times faster than a P100!

Good news for Intel, but a bit of a bugger for all those previously happy Pentium owners who thought they had the pinnacle of home computing. They can be consoled by the fact that the P6 is still some way off and will no doubt cost many thousands of pounds anyway. You can reasonably expect to wait 6-8 months for the P6 to come down to anything like a sensible price and until then your beloved Pentium will still be top dog.

This does of course raise the question: what's the point of buying a PC at all when it's just going to be replaced every six months? The answer is that you can always upgrade the chip in your machine when it becomes cheap to do so. At least this advancement proves that PC technology is getting better and better at an ever increasing rate. The gap between the 286 and the 386 was around 3-4 years, and it's been getting shorter with each generation.

One interesting point is that games like *US Navy Fighters* and *NASCAR* can only profit from the new technology, as the faster machines mean that at last you can play these games with full detail, and their appeal will be extended to the P6. A couple of years from now, we will all look back and wonder what all the fuss was about, but then of course there will be games that test even the new machines to their limits. Food for thought or a pain in the Pentium? Let us know.

SAY CHEESE!

Logitech have just announced the Fotoman Pixtura, a 24-bit colour digital camera for use with the PC. The camera (about the size of a slim panatella cigar, well maybe a bit bigger) can capture 48 high resolution (768x512 pixels) pictures, or alternatively 144 standard resolution ones, and the images can be downloaded through the serial port.

At present the Fotoman Pixtura is being given to developers so that the appropriate software can be optimised and if necessary created, but Logitech believe that it will be released to the public sometime in June, retailing for about £650. One of the best aspects of the Fotoman over other digital cameras is the long battery life; giving an average of 800-1,000 shots per charge. There is also an LCD display that allows you to keep track of the functions and battery charge at all times. Full review as soon as we can get our hands on one.

US GOLD IN LEAGUE WITH THE TRIADS

Great news this month as veteran software company, US Gold, announced that they had secured the rights to release *Rise of the Triad*

RECOMMENDED GAMES

Every month we recommend our favourite games to you, the PC Power readers. These will be only the creme de la creme of software and at least one of them should definitely be in your collection.

Descent

Interplay ● Power Rating: 85%

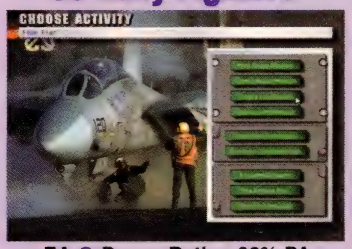
Could this game be the reason why no work was done until the last week? This mazy *Doom* clone enthralled Steve so much he has thought of nothing else all month; it is undoubtedly the finest shoot-'em-up of the year so far. Don't miss this if you've come to the point where *Doom 2* can offer you no more – it's a classic PC game.

Discworld

Psygnosis ● Power Rating 88%

Madness, magic and mayhem abound in Terry Pratchett's surreal world that sits on the back of a turtle! This PC CD-ROM game is brilliantly atmospheric with superb voices including speech from Eric Idle himself. Original point & click adventures are hard to come by and this is not to be missed!

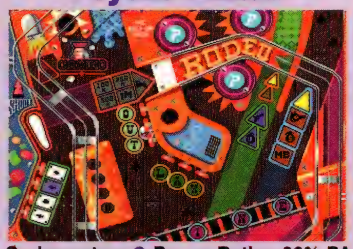
US Navy Fighters



EA ● Power Rating 96% PA

When it comes to commie bashing, *US Navy Fighters* is the game for you. One of the most realistic and engaging flight simulations ever, this has you flying missions over charming tourist spots like the Ukraine and Bosnia. The graphics too are incredible, and the variety of options will leave you gasping for air!

Psycho Pinball



Codemasters ● Power Rating 90% PA

Fast, frantic and highly playable, this is the only pinball game that comes near *Pinball Fantasies Deluxe*. With the multi-ball option and multi-flippers too, along with plenty of bonus games and features, this will keep you and up to three other people howling with delight and frustration well into the early hours of the morning!

on the PC. This is the ultra-violent gangland 3-D *Doom* clone which has been knocking about on Shareware for ages.

The object of the game is to blast everything that moves throughout the 32 levels, and a neat feature is the way that if you blunder into a boardroom, for example, and let rip with your machine gun, the windows, walls and any objects in the way will actually explode or become pock-marked with bullet holes.

Another unique feature is the way you can have two automatic pistols (Mr White style), plus a host of weapons such as the MP40 machine gun, heat seekers (just watch those Triad guys explode!) and bazookas. Add to this some terrific background details and stunning exterior levels and you've got the recipe for a stunning *Doom* game. You can even see the enemy's eyeballs fly off when you hit them at close range with an anti-tank gun – now that's what I call quite good.

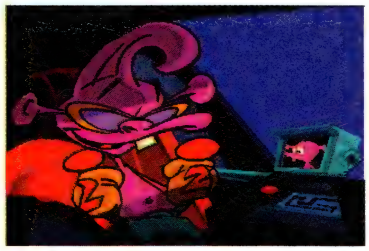
Rise of the Triad: The Dark War will be released in March on floppy and the CD version will include five new enemies. Both versions will have the capacity for an addictive and unbelievable 11 player link-up. Full review soon.

ANOTHER BYTE OF THE CHERRY

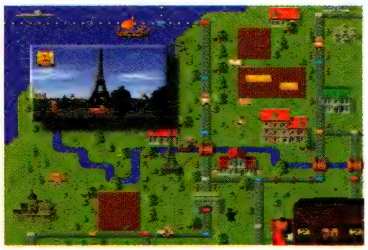
Despite a brilliant run of games since its inception in 1988, the software company Blue Byte (based in Germany) are still relative unknowns in the UK. Why remains a mystery as they are responsible for such classics as *Pro Tennis Tour*, *Settlers* and of course the *Battle Isle Series*, which are arguably the finest strategy games on the PC.

Now Blue Byte, who have just opened a UK office for the first time, are getting ready to release four totally new PC games for the middle to end of this year. The first is *Albion*, a PC CD-ROM RPG which boasts a huge playing area and an entire living world that is constantly changing and evolving as you play. As with most RPGs it gives you the chance to control up to six players in your party, and to aid you in your exploration there are an incredible 100 save game slots.

Shadow of the Empire uses the *Battle Isle* strategy engine and takes warfare to another dimension in this Windows war game. Now you can scale the different attack windows and the game includes a multi-player mode for up to six people.

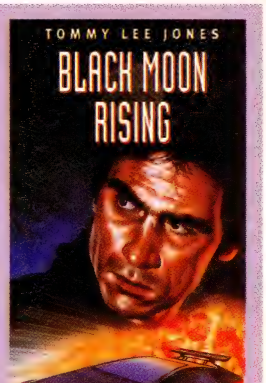


Chewy, Escape from F5 is a point 'n' click *Sam 'n Max* adventure where you guide Chewy, a spunky alien protagonist, apparently. You must rescue his friends and then go on a quest to find the Red Glump. Yeeeeessss.



Finally from Blue Byte is a game intended for younger PC players, called *Dr Drago's Mad Cap Chase*. This is an overhead travelling game set in Europe and boasts the tag-line "Absolutely violence-free." Sounds really action-packed. All these games will be out from July onwards so look out for them.

GREAT VIDEO COVERS OF OUR TIME



Number 306: *Black Moon Rising*
This month's masterpiece of design comes courtesy of the folks at Warner Brothers, whose artists have clearly been spending too much time watching old Looney Toons videos. The big questions that has to be asked is... who the hell *is* that on the cover? It says Tommy Lee Jones, but we've all seen *The Fugitive* and know what Tommo looks like, so it can't be him. Pierce Brosnan? Harvey Keitel? Eric Cantona? A Sasquatch? Your guess is as good as ours. Written by John Carpenter, frighteningly, it's available at video shops now for about a tenner, should you be interested.

ZYE WILL BE DONE

Zye Technology have contacted PC POWER with news that they have just released some new products to their Addup range. The first is the True Fire joystick, a bizarre controller which resembles a Henry Moore sculpture and is decorated in moody black and Dave Westley purple.

Perfect for designers, artists and city bankers, the True Fire allows for other weapons controls, trim adjustment, autofire, and the producers claim that the triggers use technology from sports guns. The True Fire retails for £29.99 which seems reasonable. Full review next issue.

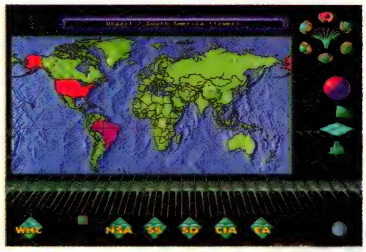
Also from Zye are the Easy 5 speakers, two rounded modules that pump out 10 watts per channel and feature turbo bass buttons. The Easy 5 are battery powered and cost just £19.99, which puts them within range of anyone who really wants to hear what their games sound like. The Easy 5 will also be reviewed next issue and all Zye products are available from most high street electrical retailers.

ET TU, JUDAS?

The latest real game from Empire (not a compilation) is *Cyberjudas*. You are the president of the USA and using the Cyberspace you must find and destroy a traitor who threatens to blow your government apart at the seams.

This is the sequel to *Shadow President* and has been edited together by movie specialists and also features some gorgeous Silicon Graphics rendered images.

The whole thing should be a glorious romp through some of the most secret agencies in the world, including the CIA and FBI and it will be out in April from Empire on PC CD-ROM only. Sorry, no floppy yet.



QUARTER FLOUNDER

The number printed in last issue's review of Quarterdeck's Gamerunner is wrong. The correct number is (01245) 496699, and the price of the Cleansweep is now £39.99 at the time of going to press. Many apologies to Quarterdeck for the mistake.

VALUE IS OUR FRIEND!

Tired of tosh CD games that just don't live up to the challenge? What you need is a CD pack that gives you ten CD-ROM games for only £29.99, preferably containing games about driving, the Blues Brothers, and of course one about a fox. If this is what you need in your life then Titus and Telstar have the answer – the Telstar 10 CD-ROM Box Set!

This 100% games-packed extravaganza contains such classics as *Titus the Fox*, *Jukebox Adventure starring the Blues Brothers*, *Prehistorik I & II*, *Fire & Forget II*, *Crazy Cars III* and *Super Cauldron* – a must for arcade fans everywhere. Sounds like a winner to me.

RISE OF THE TRIAD

DARK WAR

IT'S GONNA GET BLOODY!

AVAILABLE FROM:

GAME · Virgin MEGASTORES · HMV KNOW HMV · KNOW GAMES

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IBM PC Min 386-33 MHz 4 MEG RAM. Supports all major soundcards and IPX network supported.

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WILL OJ BE OK?

Bad taste game of the month on shareware has to be Banana Productions' *OJ's Race to Acquittal*, written amidst the controversy of OJ Simpson's trial in the States. Basically, this is a Monopoly-derived board game where up to four OJs search for complete freedom.

Each segment of the board holds a surprise for unwitting OJs and a small dice button in the centre of the screen determines how far you get to travel each move. You have to convince the 12 jurors that you are innocent; some of the evidence you uncover points to your guilt, some to your innocence. If you're lucky you can escape to Mexico, but if you're unlucky you'll wind up before Judge Ito's bench with all 12 jurors' thumbs pointing downwards.

While all this is going on, you have to keep raking in money to pay off the lawyers and other expenses. Other squares require you to answer questions about OJ's shady past or specifically about the case. Get them right and earn more money, get them wrong and your funds will diminish.

Race to Acquittal is an incredibly up-to-date piece of software; for example, when we downloaded it some of the questions related to the previous week's court proceedings. If you have a modem then it may be worth checking out, if only to see if you fare better than OJ himself.

ASSURE THING FOR IBM

Continuing its assault on the operating system monopoly created by Microsoft, IBM have begun bragging that they have supplied financial services giant, Pearl Assurance, with 5,000 copies of OS/2 2.11 and OS/2 Warp for their company-wide server system.

IBM claim that they have sold over a million copies of OS/2 warp (Can you see the hour glass? No, because it's a clock) since its launch in October 1994, but then they also state that they are the largest software company in the world. Hmm, I'm sure Microsoft would have something to say about that.

THINKING OF UPGRADING?

Then contact Amstrad Direct who have just dropped the price of their Powerpack PC9486 upgrading kit. The PC9486 contains an Intel 486SX2 50MHz processor, 4Mb RAM and a 270Mb hard drive for just £649 + VAT. The hard disk comes complete with Windows 3.11, PFS and Windows Works, so you are pretty much set up as soon as you've installed it, although if you're upgrading your PC anyway, presumably you

..PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE ULTIMATE AIR COMBAT EXPERIENCE....

FIGHTER WING IS THE LAST WORD IN DOGFIGHTING SIMULATION COMBINING ALL THE REALISM OF A FLIGHT SIMULATOR WITH THE FUN OF A SHOOT'EM-UP.

Features include:

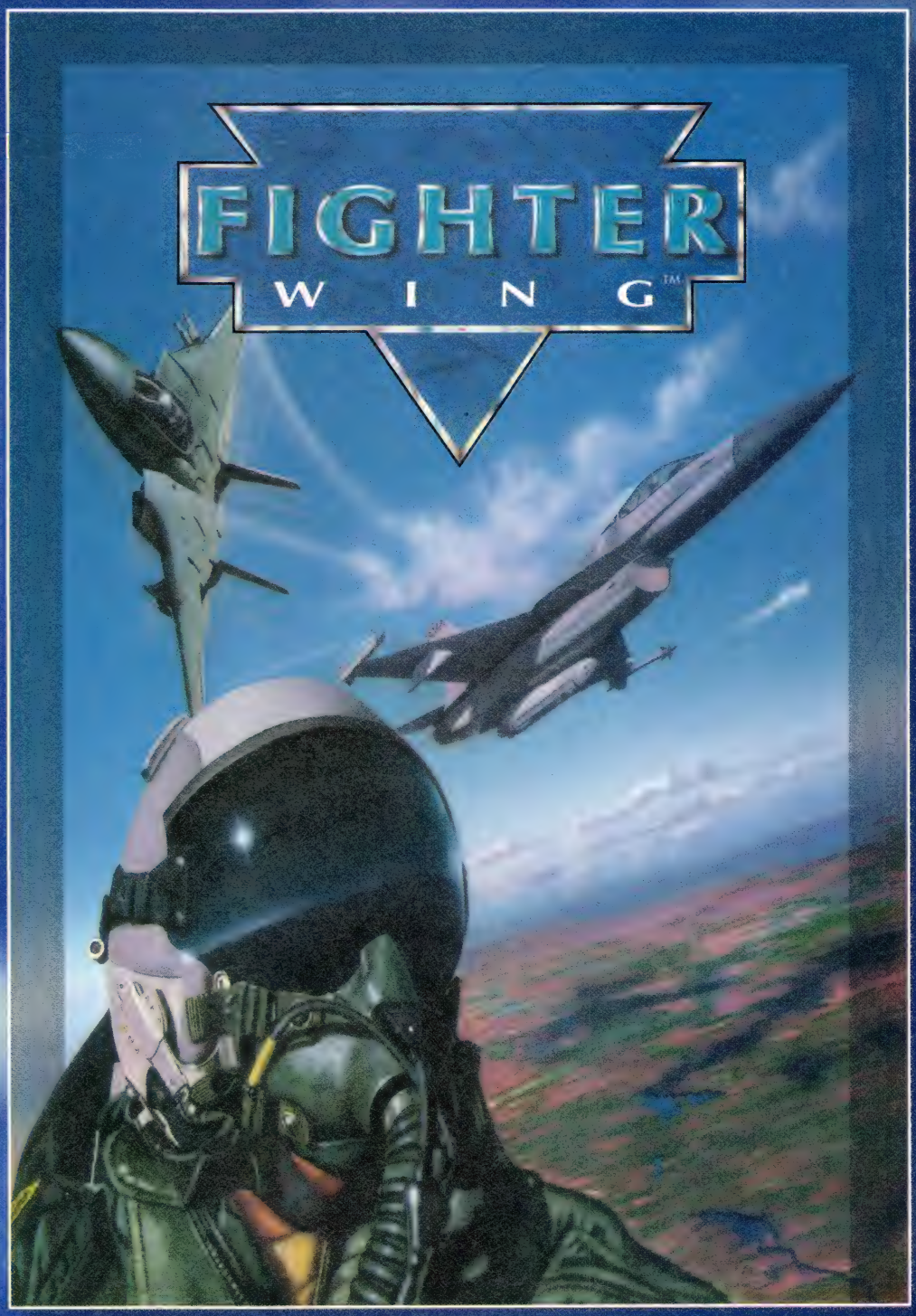
- Supports all VGA modes up to and including 800x600.
- CD-ROM version features footage from the TV series FIREPOWER.
- Supports up to sixteen players over a Local Area Network.
- Geographically correct terrain from some of the world's most explosive warzones.
- Choose from over a dozen American or Russian built aircraft.

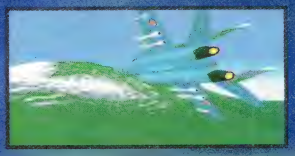
"has a state-of-the-art 3D render engine"

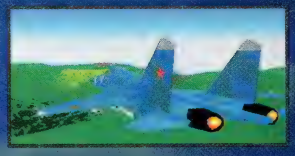
PC Power

"it plays like a dream, looks utterly fab... a slick-looking sit-and-shoot experience that will appeal to everyone"

PC Zone







Available on PC CD ROM and 3.5" Floppy from February '95
RRP £39.95

Merit Studios Europe, 9D Ash Way, Houghton-le-Spring, Durham, DH4 6JW Tel: 0191 385 7755 Fax: 0191 385 6444

MERIT STUDIOS

already have all the software you need.

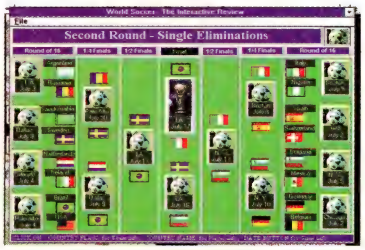
Multimedia virgins can also rejoice that the PC9486 Multimedia pack, which is the same as the normal pack, but contains a double speed CD-ROM drive, 16-bit stereo sound card, speakers and plenty of accompanying software, is now only £799 + VAT.

Business users also get their own Pandora's box, containing a 486DX2 50MHz processor, 4Mb RAM, 528Mb of hard drive space, and a host of Microsoft software including Windows, Lotus 1-2-3 and Lotus AmiPro – all for £799 + VAT. Interested parties can call freephone (0800) 338844 for more information.

THE CD SIDE OF SOCCER

Definitely something for the football addict is *World Soccer*. It's a CD Multimedia package containing all the results, FMV footage of the most spectacular goals, and the rest of the excitement that made football headlines at last year's World Cup in the USA.

With all the inside news and gossip plus a look at every World Cup since the dawn of time, with clips of



great footballers such as Pelé and Diego Maradona, this is the type of package that will keep football enthusiasts glued to their PC, even when *Match of the Day* is on.

As a bonus, the CD will also include the full version of *Empire Soccer* which, as it goes, is not a bad footy game. If you've got a CD-ROM, a fist full of tenners and a desperate urge to relive World Cup fever, then look for *World Soccer* from Empire this month.

PC Envy

And there was me thinking that it was only magazine journos and actuaries who brag about the size of their PCs – but no! We've had literally tens of letters for the PC Envy section, all desperate to tell the world about the size of their package.

Remember, all you have to do to be included in this frankly sad section is to send a picture of you and your machine (the weirder the location the more likely you will get in print, although we accept no responsibility for you dropping your PC off a cliff whilst trying to get a photo!) and then include the relevant details.

Send your specs to *PC Envy, PC Power magazine, Durham House, 124 Old Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 1NF*. This month Mark Slater (age 2) from Barrow-in-Furness expounds the virtues of his DX4 and wins the Hit Squad's Twin Calibre pack containing *Indianapolis 500* and *Wing Commander*. Anybody complaining about the iffy prizes will be ridiculed down the phone.

Name: Mark Slater
PC Owned: 486DX4-100 (16Meg RAM), 2Mb VLB, Gravis Ultra Max, Soundblaster 16, CH Flightstick, Star LC30 Colour Printer, Panasonic Double Speed CD-ROM, Yamaha YST-MIO speakers.
Total Cost: A lot.
Games Installed: *System Shock* (by the look of the photo).
Pet Name: Shorty, presumably.

SOUNDBITE

34% of UK companies are planning to invest in new hardware and software this year, so says a quarterly investment survey conducted by Lombard Business Finance. This is an 11% increase on a similar survey held 18 months ago. An economic recovery? Or does everyone just want to network link *Doom 2*?

ORCHID'S ULTIMATE MPEG CARD

Nope, we don't mean this is Orchid's last, but they claim it's the Dobermann's doobries when it comes to displaying VideoCDs and MPEG footage within a game. The Kelvin MPEG card features 64-bit graphic acceleration and a claimed 30 frames per second video playback (although we won't know for sure until we review one).

The Kelvin also uses the Sigma chipset which means no compatibility problems with any CD-Rom titles, VideoCDs or CD-i games. The card is also capable of displaying resolutions up to 1024x768 in 24-bit colour (16.8 million at 800x600!) up to full screen.

You can buy your MPEG card now from Orchid on (01256) 479898. The list price is £299 for the 1Mb version and £345 for the 2Mb. All prices exclude VAT. PC Power will review the card next issue.

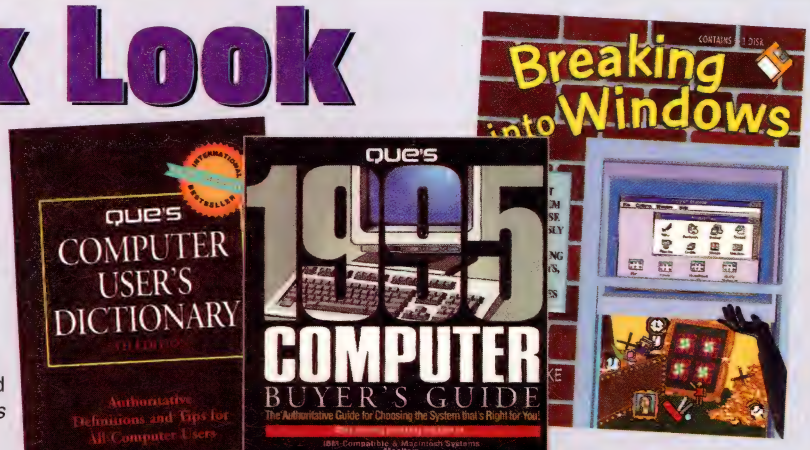
A POWERFUL CD

Just as this issue was going to press, a CD flopped onto the PC *Power* doormat containing over 470(!) programs and files for use through Windows. CD Power Vol 1 by the Multimedia Products Entertainment group retails for £19.99 and contains shareware versions of such classics as *Doom* and *Wolfenstein*, as well as kooky basic games like *Centipede* and a shooting gallery game. There are certainly enough to keep most people happy for hours and it seems a great value pack. The rendered intro is fab too.

Book Look

Our look at a selection of PC books from Computer Manuals, (0121) 706 1188.

This month we look at Que's *Computer User's Dictionary* by Brian Pfaffenberger (crazy name, crazy guy), the *1995 Computer Buyer's Guide*, and finally, *Breaking into Windows* by Matthew Lake.



First up is the *Computer User's Dictionary* and I must say it is absolutely fantastic because it explains in authoritative detail the meaning of all those acronyms that you always thought you knew, but in fact didn't have clue about. Now you can talk about MIPS, MIDI, RISC and CSMA/CD till the cows come home – and actually know what they mean. Hooray. This is an invaluable guide to computing terms and it's no wonder it has sold 250,000 copies. Highly recommended for £11.99.

Also from Que Publishing (Que?), is the *1995 Buyer's Guide* which basically looks at every piece of equipment you can get for your PC, explains what they are, and gives a brief price list of the best models. The only problem is that this is a wholly American publication and therefore practically all of the information about the machines is useless. Useful as an expensive (£18.49) doorstop though.

Finally this month it's the inevitable humorous computer book, *Breaking into Windows*, which is actually an upbeat and engaging guide to the complexities of the system. Printed in full colour, the text is easy to read, written in a light style and is very informative. Worth a look for £22.95.

"...UNBEATABLE!" PC POWER 94%

"Quite simply a 'must-buy' for novices and chess addicts alike." 5/5 *****/*****

RECOMMENDED CD-ROM User RECOMMENDED

"The strongest, most intelligent and visually impressive chess package I've ever seen." PC ZONE

AVAILABLE FOR PC CD-ROM

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telstar F&G fun & games

For further information on Virtua Chess or other products from Telstar Fun & Games please send a SAE to Telstar Fun & Games, The Studio, 62-64 Bridge Street, Walton-On-Thames, KT12 1AP

The company will also be releasing VP Kidz which is an educational equivalent, and also VP Office, containing hundreds of useful programs for stressed executives. CD Power and all the VP CDs are available from high street retailers now, but if you want more information on your area then call (01924) 457138. Full reviews of all VP products in a future PC POWER.

SOUNDBITE

Modified, a multimedia band based in the UK have just become the first group to have their debut single, *frEQuency*, released on CD-ROM. Just thought you'd want to know...

CARRY ON SCREAMING

Sicko fans will go ape this summer as *Dark Seed 2* from Cyberdreams oozes onto the shelves and sits in the corner looking wretched. If you remember, the first game was inspired by HR Giger's dark paintings and proved to be a huge hit with Goths and adventure fans alike.

The sequel is again a point 'n' click and be sick affair, but it now features superb SVGA locations that resemble perfect photos and it's much bigger too.

Also from Cyberdreams is the weird game, *I Have No Mouth, And I Must Scream*, which is another dark adventure, this time taken from a story by Harlan Ellision, who, interestingly, also wrote an episode of *Star Trek* where Kirk gets off with Joan Collins. Bizarre, but then that's Cyberdreams for you.

STONEKEEP COMING THIS SUMMER!

At last, *Stonekeep* from Interplay, the huge 3-D adventure featuring one of the best intros we've ever seen, is nearing completion and it looks fantastic, a bit like waking up one morning and finding you're married to Elle Macpherson.

The aim of the game is unfortunately clichéd. The Orb of Life has been lost and the Goddess Thera has sent you on a quest to find it and defeat the Shadow King.

From what PC POWER has seen of *Stonekeep* so far, we can only predict that it has the potential to do for RPG/adventures what Interplay's *The Bard's Tale* did for the same genre when it was released all those years ago.

With a 3-D first person perspective similar to *Doom*, *Stonekeep* looks as if it will blow the latter away when it comes to gameplay. The monsters you fight, deep within its many dungeons, are all painstakingly rendered, giving a realism that far outshines anything else. *Stonekeep* will set the industry alight and it's due out in the summer on CD-ROM only.

For now, here's a picture of someone's flesh being ripped off to keep you happy.

CD-ROM CHARTS

1 (1)	Microcosm	Psygnosis
2 (NE)	Reunion	Grandslam
3 (5)	Wing Commander 3	EA
4 (NE)	Innocent Until Caught	Psygnosis
5 (6)	Creature Shock	Virgin
6 (4)	Doom II	Virgin
7 (3)	Magic Carpet	Virgin
8 (NE)	Alone in the Dark 3	Infogrames
9 (NE)	Premier Manager 3	Gremlin
10 (NE)	X-Wing CD	LucasArts

FULL-PRICE PC CHARTS

1 (3)	Sim City 2000	Maxis
2 (NE)	Premier Manager 3	Gremlin
3 (17)	Indycar Racing	Virgin
4 (NE)	Defender of the Empire	LucasArts
5 (4)	Doom 2	Virgin
6 (9)	Transport Tycoon	MicroProse
7 (NE)	FIFA Int Soccer	EA
8 (14)	Cannon Fodder 2	Virgin
9 (6)	Lion King	Virgin
10 (-)	Microsoft Flight Sim 5.0	Microsoft
11 (13)	NASCAR	Virgin
12 (5)	Star Trek 25th Anniversary	Interplay
13 (8)	TIE Fighter	Virgin
14 (15)	All New World of Lemmings	Psygnosis
15 (NE)	TFX	Ocean
16 (20)	Microsoft Space Sim	Microsoft
17 (16)	Aladdin	Virgin
18 (-)	Theme Park	Bullfrog
19 (7)	Colonisation	MicroProse
20 (NE)	Mavis Beacon 2 (UK)	Mindscape

For budget charts, turn to page 103.

KILLER QUEEN

New from Psygnosis is *She Queen – Death Machine* (what a title) by programmers Divide By Zero. This is a horizontally scrolling platform game staring a femme fatale of Ripley proportions.

The plot revolves around a peaceful planet invaded by a huge *Star Wars* type empire who have taken over the city and wasted half of the population, including the entire armed forces. The planet appears doomed until a mythological female warrior called the Widowmaker is resurrected and decides to wage war on the invading forces.

Essentially this means you have a female lead character, but Divide are at pains to point out that this isn't a token gesture. She does not run around in a bikini, she just happens to be a woman, which makes a change from the muscle-bound Aryan guys who normally present themselves in times of trouble.

The game is technically fast and is optimised for most machines, so even on a 386 it will update at speed. With eight planes of parallax scrolling, nice character definition and smooth animation, *She Queen* has the polished look of the

Next month in PC POWER

Modem life is rubbish?

Whether you're surfing the net, scouring for saucy .GIF files for your desktop, playing network *Doom2*, or just chatting away to .Helen in Kentucky, you need one vital piece of equipment – a modem. PC Power presents the ultimate, no holds barred guide to modem choosing, buying and using. What are the best models for your money? Why do I keep getting an engaged tone? And will I have to sell a kidney to pay for the phone bill? All this and more in our major 14 page feature next issue.

Retro-Spect

Spectrums were great, Spectrums were cool and now your £1,500 PC can be forced to play games just like a £25 Sinclair. We spend a week with the Z80 Spectrum Emulator to discover if games really were great in ye olde days.

BC Racers, Ticonderoga, Orion Conspiracy, Virtual Golf, Full Throttle, Afraid of the Dark, Virtua Chess, Pizza Tycoon, Dark Forces, Virtual Pool, Simon the Sorcerer II, Frontier: First Encounters, Slipstream 5000, Flight Unlimited, Fighter Wing, AirPower, NBA Live '95, Baldies, Phantasmagoria, 11th Hour, Worms, Dungeon Master II* and of course the official release of *Rise of the Triad.

Plus all the latest hardware and technical reviews including an £8,000 notepad, Virtual i-o i-Glasses, the MMU 2000 portable multimedia unit, some of the fastest CD drives we've ever seen, Maxis' plans to rule the world, and of course a bundle of new controllers, sound cards, peripherals and tons of add-ons you never knew you needed! It's all in PC POWER next month.

PC POWER #17: ON SALE 13 APRIL

Psygnosis classic, *Shadow of the Beast.*

Action allows the warrior to fight in any direction and although the game moves primarily horizontally, there is also vertical movement up ladders and onto ledges, all the while avoiding the endless stream of protagonists. Weapons range from a bog standard gun to a flame-thrower, all quickly accessed via joystick or keyboard.

As well as gratuitous violence, each level contains a special task such as taking out enemy agents or finding prisoners. There are nine different levels including a ruined city, forest, swamp, air field, underground bunkers and even a tank level. There are also planes for you to take control of, some of them as big as the screen. Is the PC ready for a truly stunning platform game? Find out next issue.

SILENT RUNNING

A new game from SSI is *Silent Hunter*, a WWII simulation where you command a variety of submarines, including the Gato, Balos, Tambour and Salmon; prowling the south Pacific in search of the Japanese. Players can choose single sorties or complex campaigns that take you away from port for months at a time. SVGA graphics and realistic 3-D models depict 360° views of the enemy ships, adding to the overall realism. Could this be the best sub sim ever? Find out soon.

FREEDOM WITH JOY!

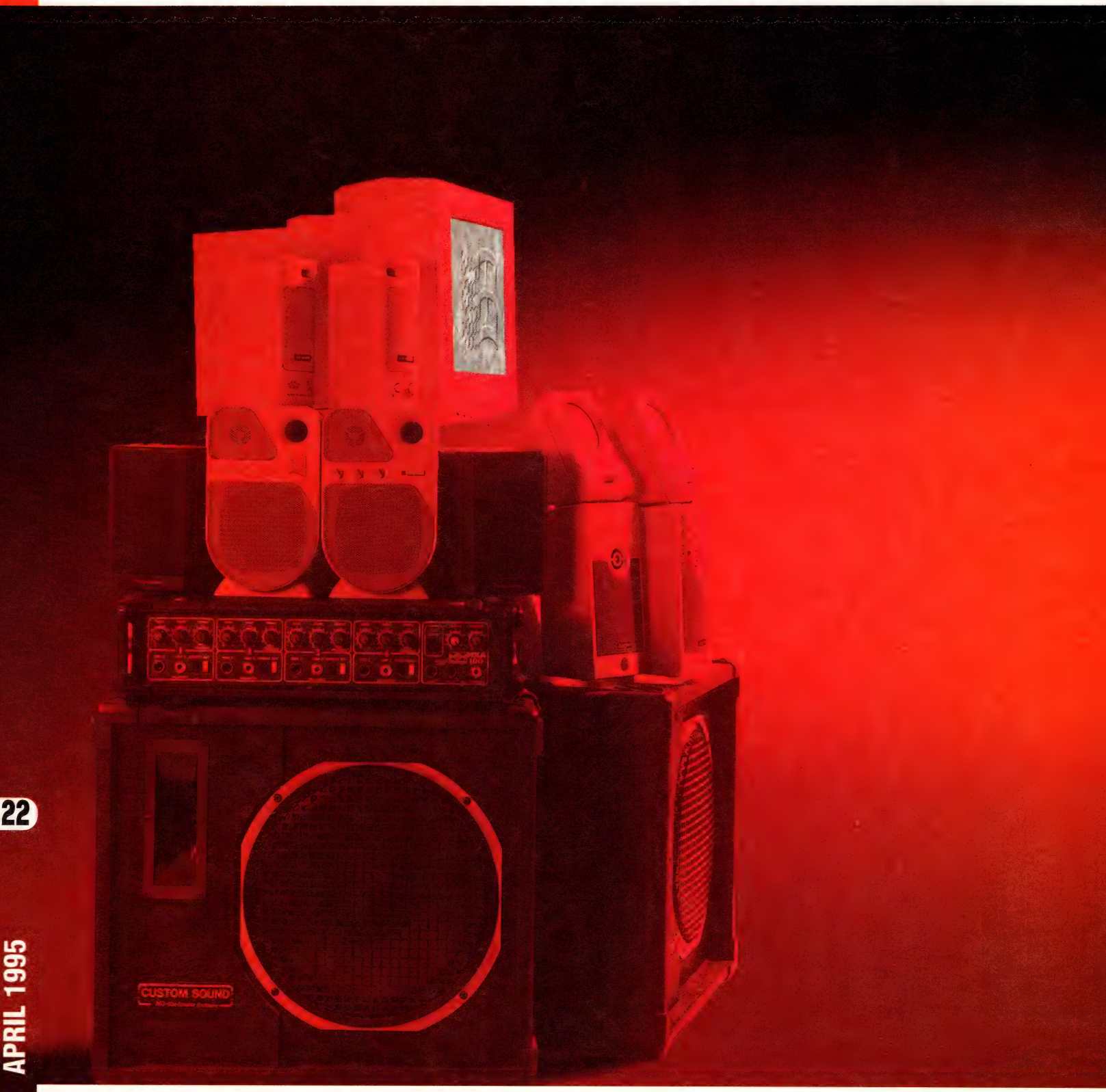
JC Designs have just announced the release of the Gamecard II PCMCIA games port adapter. This is a nifty little gadget that fits into the PCMCIA socket at the back of any notebook and allows you to connect up to two joysticks.

This means you can be travelling up from London to Edinburgh on the train, fancy a quick game of *Dynablaster* and get the whole carriage involved. Basically, anywhere you can use a notebook, you can now play with a joystick, and the Gamecard II is fully compatible with all games that use normal desktop joysticks. All this for £44.95+VAT (a straight £45 would be better).

TEAM 17 INTO TOP GEAR

Just time to show you a couple of exclusive shots from Team 17's latest game, working title *3-D Off Road Racer.*

MELODY



The most significant progress in the PC multimedia market can be found in the field of electronic sound synthesis. Since the days of pioneering artists like Kraftwerk and The Human League, synthesised sound has progressed to the point where all music is given the digital treatment during its mastering process. The PC has not been slow to adjust to this new understanding of the mechanics of sound.

MAKERS

Photomontage by Andy McDermott. With apologies to Maxell...

Simple synthesisers like the AdLib FM card appeared well over five years ago, while the sound cards available today have more in common with professional music hardware. So, what is the right hardware and software for the sound you need? This feature aims to find a card for every user, from the casual gamer with a small budget, to the more dedicated musician.

Do You Speaker My Language?

If your PC's output sounds tinny and distorted like a fight in a crisp packet, then what you need are some new speakers. Jon Pyle pins back his ears to test a few.

TS-D20 Active Speaker System

Bits & PCs ● (01344) 776050 ● £129

The Aiwa TS-D20 speaker system consists of two small speakers which play mid-to-high frequency sounds, while a big fat bass box amplifies the signal and pumps out the lower frequencies. The speakers also switch themselves off after a certain period of inactivity.

They appeared in our office at around the same time as a new MPEG card. It was not long before they were coupled together and an *Apocalypse Now* video CD was slapped into the Sony drive. Half the third floor of Paragon Publishing sat hunched around a PC as The Doors belted out *The End* with spine-jangling clarity over the rotor noise from a squadron of Huey helicopters. The horror, the horror. The adjustable bass boom is powerful enough to shake floorboards and these speakers went down a storm with everyone here, even drowning out all protests from the insurance firm below us.

Rating: 85%

Screenbeat 3

Spectravideo ● (0181) 9022211 ● £15.99

These speakers have two main disadvantages. Firstly, they do not come with a compatible power adapter, and secondly the documentation pretends that it is possible to suspend two 3 1/2oz speakers from the side of your monitor by two small sections of Scotch tape. This is patently not true. For several days, our office resounded to the unique racket created by a speaker tumbling several inches from the monitor to the desk below.

The output from these speakers is acceptable to most home users, but their design misses some major points.

Rating: 50%

CS 600

Dimensional Services ● (01844) 345406 ● £32.99

This is the basic model of the Labtec CS range, consisting of two single-speaker units which can be run from either battery or 6-volt mains power (neither is supplied). Alternatively, the system is small enough to be powered by the internal amplifier of most sound cards. It is able to reproduce sounds throughout most of the human hearing range, but the tiny size makes for a rather empty sound. These speakers are ideal for normal MPC use, but don't expect too much from them.

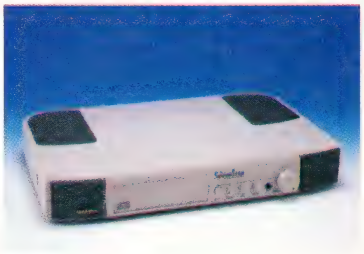
Rating: 65%

CS 900

Dimensional Services ● (01844) 345406 ● £89.99

The CS 900's bring extra control to your PC's sound output. They feature a treble booster switch like the CS 800, but also include a variable bass boost, meaning that you can control the amount of 'thump' they output. They also include an air vent at the front which allows air to flow through the speakers, making bassy sounds more accurate.

Rating: 75%



SoundForce One

Quickshot ● (0181) 365 1993 ● £39.99

These understated units consist of a bass box and a high-frequency 'tweeter'. The built-in amplifier runs from a 12-volt power adapter which comes with the system and they feature variable balance, volume, bass and treble.

Rating: 75%

80-Watt PC Speakers

LMP ● Price £79.99

As their name suggests, these speakers are capable of throwing out 80 watts of sound. Their simple design includes a built-in power adapter, volume, bass and treble controls and the necessary cable to connect them to your sound card. They feature bass vents and are comprised of a low frequency 'woofer' and high frequency 'tweeter'. These speakers create a lively, accurate sound and are guaranteed to satisfy even the most noise-hungry PC user.

Rating: 80%

Soundmate 450

Quickshot ● (0181) 365 1993 ● £12.99

The Soundmate 450s areQuickshot's version of the obligatory low-end MPC speaker. They feature bass and treble boosting switches and can be operated from either a 6-volt DC adapter or 4 pen-light batteries, neither of which are included with the speakers. As you would expect from their size, they sound pretty bad, but will suit those looking for an uncomplicated system.

Rating: 65%

MPC speakers

Tandy ● Price TBA

The Realistic MPC speaker system includes a number of unique features, including bass boosting (amplifying low frequencies) and surround sound (creating a 3-D effect from a normal stereo input). The two speaker system is housed in reassuringly heavy casing, with sturdy wire-mesh covers protecting both units. The sound reproduction is faithful to the computer's output but unfortunately, with the bass boosting option enabled, the sound can often be overwhelmed by the lower frequencies, creating a rather muffled effect.

Rating: 75%

Card Games

No matter how good your speakers, if you've got a duff sound card, your aural pleasure will be severely restricted. We look at some of the best (or otherwise) on offer...

SOUNDBLASTER 16

Creative Labs ● (01734) 344322 ● £67 (value version), £119 (multi-CD controller), £139 (SCSI-2 controller)

The SB16 is a 16-bit stereo sound card capable of recording waves at rates equivalent to CD quality (44kHz). The FM synthesiser included on the board is one of the best available, and the expanded version of the card can control a Sony, Mitsumi or Panasonic CD-ROM drive. All models support the Creative WaveBlaster add-on board.

The software supplied spans four disks and is split into the driver software and the Windows applications required to control the card's functions. Totalling 6.5 megabytes, the installation process creates a number of Windows programs in addition to modifying your AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files.

One application is the Creative Mixer, which allows the SoundBlaster's inputs and outputs to be amplified at different levels, but only supports one input at a time, unlike the SFX3000.

Creative's answer to the unstoppably popular Sound Impression is the Creative Ensemble, a group of utilities which each constitute one section of a hi-fi lookalike front end. Run simultaneously, the Ensemble programs combine into one display which uncannily resembles the front of a hi-fi. The Ensemble utilities provided allow wave files, midi files, and CD audio to be played through the mixer, and an additional utility, Ensemble Remote, allows you to control the CD player from a smaller interface shaped like an infra-red remote controller.

Another utility called Creative Wave Studio allows wave files to be recorded, edited and manipulated. The program allows any size of sample, so long as it fits into your Windows swap file (this is normally around 20Mb). The trouble with these large files is that they tend to make Windows, and CT Wave Studio in particular, alarmingly unstable. This said, the editor provides all of the functions that you could reasonably demand from a program of this type.

Another utility, Sound OLE, also allows samples to be recorded into the card, and is geared towards the easy interchange of sound files from one package to another. Sounds can be recorded and passed straight through to Wave Studio without even saving them.

The SB16 is also the only card to include a game. *Mosaic* allows the player to shuffle pieces of a picture around to attempt to recreate the original image. You can even load your own images into the puzzle.

The sound quality from the SB16's in-built FM synthesiser is very good, whilst the wave playback is also very clear. One reservation about this card is that it does not include any MIDI software except the Ensemble MIDI player. The card is ideal as a games playing device and allows the user to progress to wave table synthesis through the WaveBlaster add-on board.

Rating: 70%

AUDIOSOUND 16

TecnoPlus ● Tel ? ● £99.99

This card handles 16-bit waves and FM music in stereo. It accepts Sony, Mitsumi and Panasonic CD-ROM drives, has a built-in joystick port and is compatible with Creative Lab's WaveBlaster add-on which allows full wavetable synthesis. The card is also SoundBlaster compatible, in fact it's so similar to the SoundBlaster, it would be difficult to tell the difference between a machine with an AS16 installed from one equipped with Creative's SB16. The main difference between the two cards is the software supplied.

The AS16 comes with only three installation disks; the driver files, Midisoft Recording Session and a Windows application called Sound Impression. The driver disk installs all necessary software to initialise the card and any attached CD drives under both DOS and Windows. The install program then modifies your AUTOEXEC.BAT, CONFIG.SYS and the Windows SYSTEM.INI file accordingly.

Midisoft Recording Session is the same MIDI music package included with the Ultrasound Max, Audiotrix Pro and many other sound cards. It allows standard MIDI files to be edited in musical notation format. Its features cover most of the editing tools required by a MIDI musician, but without the wavetable synthesis upgrade, its true potential cannot be realised.

The Sound Impression installation creates two extra icons on your Windows desktop, a Wave form Editor and the main Sound Impression package. Sound Impression forms a front end which closely resembles the controls of a hi-fi. This allows you to control the CD drive and the card's internal amplifier/mixer, and It plays MIDI files and Windows wave files (.WAV).

The mixer allows the intensity of the input signal and the three output signals to be mixed together using simple sliding controls. Balance, master volume and input selection can also be performed through the no-nonsense interface.

Wave form Editor allows wave files to be recorded through the card, saved to disk and edited through a slightly quirky front end. Samples can be mixed together, reversed, and filtered. A number of effects are also supported including reverb, echo, fading and panning across the two stereo channels.

The FM output generated by the card is acceptably smooth, and the CD-quality audio is naturally of a very high standard. The card's easy installation and instant compatibility make it an ideal cheap-and-cheerful MPC sound card. The only drawback to this product is the lack of software supplied when compared to other cards.

Rating: 75%

ORCHID SOUND DRIVE 16

Orchid ● (01256) 479898 ● £79

The Sound Drive 16 is a 16-bit stereo sound card capable of sampling at rates up to 44kHz. It has inputs for microphone and line-in. It includes a built-in CD-ROM interface capable of controlling Mitsumi drives only, and an OPL3 synthesiser. It also supports a SCSI controller chip which accommo-

dates SCSI-2 devices such as scanners, tape drives, and CD-ROMs. The Sound Drive 16 also has the option of a wavetable daughter board which, in effect, expands the board's capabilities to those of a Sound Wave 16.

The Yamaha OPL3 synthesiser allows 20 simultaneous voices and the capture hardware lets you compress sound data down to a quarter of its original size, but beware as this will cause a serious drop in audio quality (see Sound Wave review).

Orchid have provided a number of Windows utilities which allow you to control the card's functions. A simple tutorial MIDI package called Key-Z Player allows the key and scale of your music to be chosen, and a keyboard layout to be selected before enabling the user to play the OPL3 synth through the PC keyboard. A few MIDI files are also supplied with the necessary key and scale data, and these provide ideal musical accompaniment.

Audio Recorder covers the card's sampling features by allowing you to record, play and edit wave forms at rates from 2kHz to 44kHz in mono or stereo and also supports the Sound Drive's sample compression hardware.

Extended Recorder allows large sound samples to be recorded, using the Windows swap file to store the data as it is recorded.

The last group of utilities deals with using audio to produce messages at certain times. A stopwatch, an alarm and a talking clock are a few of the wide range of extremely similar packages provided.

The Windows software supplied does not reflect the true usefulness of the card though. The Sound Drive's capabilities appear best suited to games software as the card supports both SoundBlaster/AdLib and Windows Sound System emulation. Orchid are currently giving away a free set of speakers to any SD16 owner who sends in their registration card.

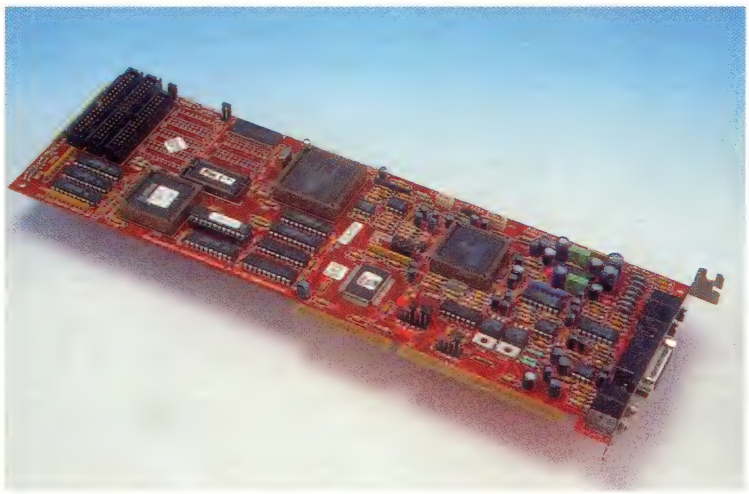
The Sound Drive has its drawbacks though. While the 16-bit wave output is naturally crystal clear, the sound quality from the Yamaha OPL3 synthesiser is jumpy and lacks polish. I used to believe that all FM synthesisers sounded alike but, even for FM, the Sound Drive's OPL3 output is a less than pleasant experience.

Rating: 60%

GRAVIS ULTRASOUND MAX

Advanced Gravis ● £234 with 512Kb memory, £278.99 with 1Mb memory

The Gravis UltraSound Max captures and plays mono or stereo 16 bit samples at rates of 11kHz to 48kHz (that's higher quality than CD). The Max supports simultaneous wave recording and playback, 32 OPL4 voices, and is capable of creating true surround sound. It comes with 192 general MIDI instrument patches, which are interchangeable through a Windows utility, imaginatively titled Patch Manager.



This card is immense, a good 13" long, but once the hardware has been shoe-horned into your machine, things get a lot less stressful. The software installation is all managed from a sturdy menu program which prompts you to set the necessary address, DMA and IRQ to control the card.

Two sales-boosting shareware games, namely *Doom* and *Epic Pinball,* are included which provide specific support for the UltraSound. This is a shrewd move as their inclusion pushes the idea of Gravis compatibility becoming a standard, whilst they pay no licensing fees.

The more serious software provided allows you to record sound samples and convert them for use with most sound packages. Patch Manager creates MIDI instruments from collections of samples for use in your own musical efforts.

Recording Session is almost identical to the Midisoft Music Magic package which comes with the AudioTrix Pro. It allows MIDI data to be edited entirely in musical notation, and the menu options cover just about every aspect of MIDI control.

The sound quality on the Gravis is excellent, wave playback is possible at slightly above CD quality and the MIDI patches are all constructed from clean, well-mastered samples, although the general MIDI patch list could do with some adjustments to make it more compatible. SoundBlaster support for games is provided by a TSR utility called SBOS, and while most games will work with SBOS, it does tend to slow them down. This is a decreasing problem though, and as the UltraSound becomes more popular, it is beginning to look like a semi-standard for high-end game cards.

Rating: 80%

MEDIATRIX AUDIOTRIX PRO

Koch Media ● (01252) 714340 ● £284

The Audiotrix Pro from MediaTrix is a stereo 16-bit wave capture/playback device with general MIDI OPL4 support and OPL3 FM synthesis. 18 FM, 24 MIDI voices and two wave replay channels are provided. Wave forms can be sampled at 11kHz, 22kHz, or 44kHz in 8 or 16-bit format, mono or stereo, and mono SoundBlaster support is provided through hardware as opposed to the Gravis software solution.

The card's software consists of a suite of utilities from the card's manufacturers, DMP – an Amiga module file player, Sound Impression – a utility allowing playback of just about any form of audio data, SuperJAM Jnr – a kind of MIDI karaoke, Soft Karaoke – an actual karaoke machine, and Midisoft Music Magic – the same MIDI editor as the Gravis Ultrasound.

The manufacturers' own software spans four utilities; AudioTrix Jukebox, Recorder, Input and Output mixers. Jukebox allows tracklists of MIDI and WAV files to be created and played in order, a sort of make-your-own-album utility which comes with some high quality MIDI files including a few Jean-Michel Jarre tracks. Audiotrix Recorder is a wave capture program with a front panel styled like a dictaphone. It appears to be geared towards business users and even incorporates a button which starts up Windows Write (eeeurgh).

The Windows mixer software for this card gives an option not supported by any other card. This loop option sends the card's output into the wave capture input, a task normally performed by two plugs and a bit of wire, but implemented in software for the terminally lazy. One problem with the loop option is that if the mixer's monitor option is that it can create a feedback loop. This causes the kind of penetrating whistle you might hear at a Jesus and Mary Chain gig, and can be irritating at 4 o'clock in the morning, as my flat-mates will testify.

DMP or Dual Module Player is a DOS based utility which plays old-fashioned Amiga modules through an old-fashioned command-line interface and it does a very good job. The modules provided are abysmal, but thousands more are available and most are public domain. In addition to the Amiga's standard four tracks of stereo waves, DMP can play 8-track modules much better than the Amiga ever did.

Soft Karaoke is almost as bad as the real thing, except you don't have to do it in public. It plays MIDI files with an accompanying lyrics display and can record the microphone input at the same time. Oh joy. Songs included are: Dust in the Wind, New York New York, Steamy Windows, Stand by Your Man and The Way We Were. Yuk.

The card's sound quality is fantastic. When playing MIDI files through the DSP add-on, it really comes alive with complex acoustic effects such as reverb and chorus. Although other cards such as the AWE32 include DSPs in their arsenal, the AudioTrix Pro provides the best MIDI playback of the cards reviewed here.

Rating: 90%

SOUNDBLASTER AWE 32

Creative Labs ● (01734) 344322 ● £278.99

The AWE 32 is a MIDI OPL4 device, uses the same port address range as all SoundBlasters and is instantly compatible with all previous SoundBlasters. The card's wavetable synthesis output allows 32 instruments to play simultaneously (hence the name). FM OPL3 output supports four modulating wave forms, giving a good degree of control over the sounds generated. Wave output supports 8 or 16-bit mono or stereo recording/playback in the frequency range 5kHz to 44.1kHz, and as an added bonus, the PC's beep speaker can be mixed into the card's output. The AWE can be upgraded by adding up to 28Mb to the standard 512Kb of on-board RAM and by adding what creative call an Advanced Effects Processor, a DSP.

The AWE comes with an impressive amount of software, which includes a CD controller for Windows, a mixer panel with handy bass and treble controls, and some silly utilities called Voice Assist and Text Assist which perform simple speech synthesis and recognition.

More useful is Wave Studio which allows sound samples of immense size to be captured and edited. It works well with samples up to around 3Mb long on my 8Mb machine, but past that limit, the program is forced to use the Windows swap-file to store the data. This makes the whole program crash with alarming regularity.

Sound OLE is a small 'applet' which records from a selected input and can incorporate a mixer utility and Ensemble CD. Recording sounds is easy enough and is done via a simple cassette recorder-style control panel, showing the amplitude of the incoming sound and allowing the accuracy to be set prior to recording. Sound OLE is limited in that recordings can be saved in WAV format only, and there are no editing options available, but it is more sturdy than Wave Studio.

The DSP on this card can be controlled from its own software called Q Sound. This allows you to control the Q Sound semi-surround feature of the card, creating a more 3-dimensional sound. The technique works well for some midi files, but the effect is not a patch on quadraphonic surround sound.

Individual instruments can be created and modified from Vienna SF Studio which, like PatchMaker Lite on the Max, lets you create your own MIDI instruments from sound samples, then adds wavetable effects to liven them up.

The AWE 32's output is very good, the 32 channel OPL4 synthesiser outclasses most of its competitors, but the AWE, like the AudioTrix, does not show its true potential until the DSP is brought into play. While the effects produced by the AWE DSP are fractionally less awe-inspiring than the Audiotrix, they still add a spatial feeling to the sound.

Rating: 80%

ORCHID SOUND WAVE 32 PRO

Orchid ● (01256) 479898 ● £165 (with *NASCAR Racing*)

At the time of its announcement, the Sound Wave 32 had no equals. Its 32 voice wavetable synthesis is mirrored by the AWE32 which Creative launched in response to the Sound Wave, but Creative also included a DSP to process the more difficult effects supported by their card. The Sound Wave 32 Pro is Orchid's answer to the AWE, coming as it does with a DSP, in keeping with the eye-for-an-eye philosophy of the sound card industry.

The card has extended sampling capabilities over Orchid's more conservative Sound Drive 16. It can record sounds at 48kHz, better than CD quality, but does not include a CD-ROM interface. What it does provide is a 512Kb ROM of sampled wavetable instruments which are intended to knock FM synthesis into a cocked hat. The trouble with this idea is that the ROM samples have been compressed to half their size, which causes a loss of sound quality.

Creative's voice recognition software offered by their AWE32 package has been counteracted by Orchid through their own package called QuikVoice. Like Creative's Voice Assist, QuikVoice almost entirely misses the point of voice recognition by mis-reporting your input as 'escape' when you are trying to say 'save', or mistaking the word 'fish' for 'close'. Suffice to say that the solutions offered by both Creative and Orchid are far from ideal, but both seem determined to out-do each other.

The Orchid Sound Drive 16's software also appears amongst the various wares bundled with the Sound Wave 32. Key-Z Player and the Orchid Mixer panel have both been pulled from the 16, along with the ubiquitous talking clock.

MidiSoft Recording Session comes bundled with the Gravis Ultrasound and appears under a pseudonym in the AudioTrix Pro's software. Some software has also been included which is specific to the Sound Wave, though. Personal Effects takes an audio input from the microphone included with the card and distorts it according to the user's tastes, producing convincing helium effects and deep growling voices. These effects are all created through the board's severely underworked DSP effects processor. A control panel utility called AlgAE allows you to modify which effects the card applies to wavetable sounds as they are processed, but none of them can hold a candle to the haunting acoustics produced by the AWE32, let alone the AudioTrix Pro.

Rating: 65%

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Wavetable Synthesis Voices:	
TAS16	0/32*
SB16	0/32*
SoundDrive 16	0/32*
SFX3000	20
UltraSound	32
AWE32	32
AudioTrix Pro	24
SoundWave 32	32

(* – option with OPL4 or Waveboster)

Key to below: S=Sony, M/P=Mitsubishi/Panasonic

CD-ROM I/F?	
TAS	S, M/P
SB16	S,M/P,SCSI2 (all optional)
SFX16	S,M/P
SD16	M/P
GMax	S,M/P
AWE32	S,M/P
AudioTrix	Optional S, M/P Daughter board
SoundWave32	S,M/P also SCSI-2 version

	FM Synthesis	Max Wave Recording Rate
TAS	OPL3	44
SB16	OPL3	44
SD16	OPL3	44
SFX3000	OPL2	48
UltraSound	OPL3	44
AWE32	OPL3	44
AudioTrix Pro	OPL3	48

Key to below: SB=SoundBlaster, WSS=Windows Sound System, OPL3=FM OPL3 standard, OPL4=Wavetable OPL4 standard

Compatible?	SB	WSS	OPL3	OPL4
TAS	H	N	Y	N*
SB16	H	N	Y	N*
SD16	H	Y	Y	N*
SFX3000	H	N	N	Y
GMax	S**	N	Y	Y
AWE32	H	N	Y	Y
AudioTrix	H	N	Y	Y
SoundWave 32	H	Y	Y	Y

(* – option, ** – through software emulation)

Oh MIDI, You're So Fine...

If you are really interested in music, you'll eventually find the facilities offered by your PC's sound card start to limit your creativity. John Kennedy looks at the MIDI option.

Back in the old days, music synthesisers were huge hulking beasts, using electronic circuits to create sounds and passing the resulting bleeps through a variety of filters and envelope shapers. They cost a packet, took ages to warm up, and rarely allowed more than one voice to the played at a time.

The more expensive models, which offered several voices at once, were even more irksome to use, as each voice had a nasty habit of drifting out of tune with respect to the others. It could take a long time for the kit to warm up and get properly adjusted.

Even back then, it was possible to link synthesisers together using a system called CV and Gate. Two separate cables linked the machines; the CV cable carried a voltage signal which varied by 1 volt for every octave played on the keyboard, and the Gate was a switch that indicated when a key was being held down. It was a simple, workable but not particularly useful way of doing things.

As more advanced keyboards came along which depended on more reliable sound generation systems such as FM synthesis and other digital systems, the CV/Gate system was eventually replaced with MIDI – the Musical Instrument Digital Interface, which offered a high-speed serial link instead of the old fashioned analogue system. MIDI had many advantages, and the way in which signals were separated from equipment using opto-isolators meant relatively long distances were ok, and there was no danger of earth loops or other electrical phenomena.

As it was totally digital, MIDI could contain extra "code words" as well as pure pitch and note on/off information. For a start, the new-fangled MIDI system provided 16 different information channels at once, which meant up to 16 different instruments could be linked together. Later, as instruments appeared which were "multi-timbral", different channels could address different sounds within the same synthesizer. For example, channel 10 could be defined to trigger drum sounds, while channel 4 played the bass guitar preset. Each channel could trigger notes and therefore chords individually, and as well as note information, MIDI also introduced standards for sending control information, such as volume, pan and pitch bend. It was a quantum leap over the old CV/Gate system.

Although originally intended merely as a way of making connections between keyboards and sound modules more reliable and flexible, MIDI almost accidentally opened up an entirely new way of making music.

As the MIDI signal was a serial data system, any computer fitted with an appropriate interface could receive and transmit information. Serial MIDI information could be recorded, edited and replayed: the music sequencer was born. MIDI offered both accomplished and aspiring musicians an entirely new way of creating music.

The sequencer captures MIDI events from a master keyboard, and stores them in memory. The keyboard player can then correct any mistakes, such as bad notes or sloppy timing, and re-send them to the sound module. As MIDI supports up to 16 channels, the Sequencer can act as a multi-track tape recorder.

The important thing to realise is that the sequencer captures the MIDI commands and not the sound itself: so no matter how many times the tune is edited or altered, there is no degradation in sound quality.

There are those that claim the control offered by MIDI and the ability of computers to generate information has damaged music in some way. These people are nothing more than musical snobs, and probably complained that the electric guitar was a craze which would quickly die out. MIDI and sequencing is nothing more than a new tool. The human operator still needs to provide the talent, the ideas and the hard work to create music.

How can I get started?

If you are keen to get going, the first thing you should do is make sure you have a suitable sound-card with a MIDI interface that believes in the MPC401 standard. It's also possible to buy a plug-in card especially for MIDI such as the Arbiter MPC card from Dawsons ((01925) 245422), which makes sense if you don't currently own a decent sound card. Most sound cards need a few cable adapters which attach to the joystick/games port; see your manual for more details.

To begin making music, you'll need a sound source and an input device. Sometimes these can be combined into one unit such as a synthesiser keyboard, but it's also possible to buy the parts separately. For example, a master keyboard is a music keyboard which doesn't actually make any noise – instead, it transmits MIDI information. Buying a keyboard like this has advantages and disadvantages; it's a lot of money for something which makes no sound by itself, but you'll want to keep hold of a

Attention! Here's General MIDI!

If you have been looking at any external MIDI equipment or reading soundcard reviews, you will probably have seen little decals proclaiming "General MIDI" compatibility, and if so you have been wondering what it is all about.

The way in which modern sound equipment works means that each instrument has a bank of internal memory slots into which the details that make up a particular sound can be stored. The details would include the basic waveforms used in the sound, any filter settings, keyboard maps, effects settings and so on. All these details are grouped together to form a "patch" or "preset" — different manufacturers use different names.

Each and every instrument which you can buy comes with some presets to play with. Usually these presets are for two reasons: so you get completely wow-ed in the shop and buy one on the spot, and also for you to use either in whole or in part in your own compositions.

However, there has been no fixed location for any of these presets sounds. Present number 1 could be a piano on one make of sound module, and a trumpet on another. This makes swapping MIDI files between instruments extremely difficult. General MIDI solves this problem by requiring every module to have particular sounds in particular memory locations: a Grand Piano is always in preset number 1, a Jazz Guitar is always in preset number 27. General MIDI also defines drum kits, to make sure a bass drum is never confused with an open hi-hat for example. All these presets are held in ROM to ensure they are always present.

The upshot of this is that many programs (games in particular) can play their sound tracks through MIDI, expecting a GM compatible sound source on the other side. As all these GM modules generate professional quality sounds, you can bet that the end result is absolutely superb, and (for the moment) beats all internal sound cards.

The downside is that in order to gain the GM sticker, manufacturers are forced to include waveforms and presets which you probably wouldn't use in your own work all that often. For example, how many times have you needed to include a Trimphone in your music? Or an Ocarina? GM can be a large waste of resources, so if compatibility is not important to you check out sound modules like the Quasimidi systems (the Quasar and Technox) which are guaranteed not to force to you listen to the dreaded Goblin preset, and instead include sounds especially of interest to dance and techno fans.

good one when you upgrade or buy equipment which doesn't actually include a keyboard (most synthesizers are available in two forms: keyboard and rack mount. The rack systems are cheaper, and anyway: unless you are Rick Wakeman you can only play one keyboard at a time). Some example kit lists are included below. You'll also need sequencing software, and for getting started the new Steinberg *Cubasis* is perfect.

Pro-level sound gear doesn't include speakers, so if you want to listen to your music you'll either need to use headphones, the auxiliary input of a nearby hi-fi or purchase some dedicated monitor speakers. Powered (built in amplifier) monitor speakers are available for about £100, although you could press your multimedia PC speakers into action in an emergency.

If you have more than one sound source, or if you want to include vocals, real guitars, samples and so on, you'll need a mixer (and a microphone of course). Usually a cheap 6:2 or 8:2 (that is, 6 or 8 inputs to out stereo output) will suffice until you need more quality.

Now all you need to do is lock yourself away in your bedroom, sorry, recording studio and compose your hit. When you've finished, buy or hire a DAT recorder and master your epic to tape. Send it to your local A&R man and give PC POWER a credit on the record sleeve...

EXAMPLE KIT

Beginner

Good SoundCard with General MIDI option (Creative Labs AWE for example)
Novation MIDICon Controller keyboard (£89)
Cubasis software (£149)
Total: £400

Intermediate

Synthesizer keyboard (Yamaha SY35), or master keyboard and external sound module (TG300). (£500-£800)
Cubase software (£230)
Audio mixer (£200)
Total: £1000-£1200

Advanced

Mother keyboard (£300)
External sound modules (£800)
Dedicated sampler (£1500)
DAT record (£500)
Out-board affects (£500)
Drum machine (£400)
Mixing desk (£300)
Total: £4000+

MIDI Controller Codes

MIDI is a serial transmission system, and sends information in the form of strings of bytes. For example, when you press a key on a MIDI keyboard, three bytes are transmitted. The first bytes is the status byte, and the first nibble (that is, the first half of the byte) contains the special MIDI code for "Note On" while the second nibble represents the channel number. The second byte in the stream contains the note number (60 is middle C, for example), and the third byte is a measure of the volume; hitting the music keyboard harder causes louder notes to be played.

There are several status codes which can be transmitted, including:
Note On: Triggers a sound.
Note Off: Stops a sound playing.
Program change: Switch to a different preset sound.
Pitch Bend: Alter the pitch up or down.
Aftertouch: Alter the sound depending on how the key is pressed.
Control Change: Send special information (see next).

Control changes are sent to modify sounds which are currently being played. It might seem complicated, but it allows all sorts of special effects to happen in real time. A good example would be a "fade out" when you want a passage to reduce gradually in volume until nothing is heard. In this case, the sequencer can transmit the necessary note information, while the Volume Control Change values are slowly altered. The result is a totally automatic fade out.

Control information is handled differently by different sequencers; some may go so far as to implement an on-screen mixing desk with knobs you can alter with the mouse.

Control Change options include:
1 Modulation: Add a "wah wah" effect to a sound.
10 Pan: Alter the position of the sound in the stereo field.
64 Sustain: Cause notes to play for longer like a piano pedal.
7 Volume: Volume master control.

Not all instruments support all control options, but most modern keyboards and sound modules do. They also provide other options for controlling features such as low-pass filters for sweep effects.

Another important MIDI implementation is SysEx, or System Exclusive information. Each manufacturer gives their equipment unique features and different ways of doing things. SysEx ensures there is still a way of transmitting and receiving this kind of information. It's commonly used for tasks such as sending a dump (lovely word) of an instrument's preset sounds, so that they can be embedded in the sequenced song and therefore saved to disk for later retrieval.

Instruments which make use of samples, or indeed dedicated samplers, often allow the raw sound samples to be transmitted over MIDI. Although a lengthy process it's a lot cheaper that the alternatives (SCSI interfaces) and allows on-screen editing of samples with suitable software.

Music Machines

MIDI got you interested? Think you could show the current denizens of the Top 40 a thing or two? John Kennedy checks out some of the hardware you might need...

Novation BassStation

£350

Digital instruments have many advantages over the old analogue systems (tuning, warming up, reliability) but they aren't perfect. Modern dance and techno music, in particular, relies heavily on the analogue sound for pulsing bass sequences, acid-style riffs and filter sweeping; all hard to achieve with modern digital systems. The Novation BassStation may look like a toy, but it's a modern, reliable monophonic synthesiser with a built in two octave keyboard.

Best of all, the sounds are directly programmed with the bank of old-fashioned knobs. There are no multi-line LCD displays and multiple menus to wade through; twist a knob and the sound changes. The important adjustments also send out MIDI control changes which makes for terrific fun and provides a uniquely simple composition tool. Start recording, play the notes, replay the seqencer while twiddling around with the knobs, add a drum track and you have an instant dance record.

The keyboard itself is small but perfectly formed. It's velocity sensitive, and although the synthesizer is monophonic, polyphonic MIDI notes are sent out. It can also be set up to transmit and receive on different MIDI channels which makes it ideal for a mini-master keyboard as well (as long as you don't play outside the octave range).

The BassStation is one of the most fun things I've had to play with in a long time. Check it out when looking at master keyboards and watch out for an imminent rack-mount version too.

E-Mu ESi-32 Sampler

£1199

Although many sound-cards offer 16 sound sampling and replay as standard, nothing can come close to the sound of a dedicated sampler. Until recently the UK market was dominated by the ultra-expensive, ultra-white Akai range (and certain Roland models) but the new ESi-32 sampler from E-Mu has caused quite a stir. Unlike a sound-card, the E-Mu will replay up to 32 sounds at once (that's 16 different samples) with exception sound quality. The internal disk drive will store your presets.

A dedicated sampler like the E-Mu is a synthesizer sound module in it's own right. The E-Mu comes with seven floppy disks of samples which provide piano, string and percussion sounds and hundreds of other instruments too. A large sampler library is available which means you can buy ready prepared samples on disk; however, the most fun comes when you start sampling your own sounds.

The on-board computer provides all kinds of special effects (stereo panning with Doppler shift for example) and processing options (time stretching, pitch shifting, weird sample mixing effects). Each replay channel includes volume control and filter hardware for incredible flexibility.

Be warned

though that the cheapest specification ESi-32 is definitely an "entry level" system. It comes with 2Mb of RAM as standard which can hold about 8 seconds of high quality samples or 24 seconds at a lower sampling rate. For many instruments, which can be artificially extended with clever use of internal looping, this is quite enough: more than enough for a powerful drum kit for example. If you need more sampling time, the internal SIMMs can be replaced by two 4Mb, two 8Mb or even two 16Mb chips. If you plan on doing this, you'll also need to invest in something a bit better than the internal high-density disk drive. A SCSI interface can be added as an £200 option, and with a suitable hard drive (or SyQuest drive) connected, many operations are a great deal faster — and a useful "undo" feature is added. When buying make sure you get a model which has the latest operating system (currently version 1.04).

Korg OR5/W

£575

The Korg M1 was one of the first keyboards to merit the title "workstation", as it actually included a sequencer as well as a full complement of top quality sounds.

The OR5/W, the M1's latest descendant, takes all the juicy innards from a top keyboard and squeezes them into a half-rack sized box. It is a General MIDI compliant box, but with enough extra presets and programming features to make sure you don't get bored for a long time to come.

The OR5/W is a 16 channel polyphonic instrument, which means you could easily use every track on your sequencer on it alone. As you would expect with Korg, the sound quality is excellent, the string and wind patches in particular. A very flexible internal mixing option allows the digital effects section to be added to individual voices in different ways. Adding echo, reverb, chorus or various other phasing and flanging effects is relatively straightforward and as the processing is carried out digitally (before the sound is actually anything other than numbers in memory), the quality is top notch.

Programming and preset adjustment takes time to get right, as the two line display is just a little too small. You find yourself scrolling about all over the place; a slightly larger display would have made things much easier. The manual isn't the clearest in the world and it will take a lot of experimentation to get the most from this box of tricks. When you do though, there is ample on-board battery-backed memory to keep all your settings in place.

Although it might seem expensive, especially if you haven't already got any MIDI instruments or keyboards, you must remember that the flexibility of the Korg means it can fulfill the majority of your musical requirements.

Yamaha TG300

£649

You have to see this piece of kit in real life to appreciate it. No, I'm serious: go into your local music store and ask them to switch it on. The Korg OR5/w may have had a screen which was too small, but this is ridiculous.

To fit the 16 line display onto this sound module, Yamaha have had to make the half-rack box two units high, so it's almost a cube. Like the Korg, it's a GM sound module, with several other banks for user sounds.

Unlike the Korg, adjusting the sounds is remarkably easy as the large display actually mimics a miniature mixing desk, complete with a huge graphics display of multiple sliders and controls. Alter the volume setting, and the knobs magically move up and down, alter the pan and controls rotate. It's amazing to watch, but it doesn't end there as Yamaha have made it as easy as possible to control all the features from MIDI. Altering filter settings is simple as the necessary control data is transmitted and recorded by your sequencer as you adjust them in real time.

Once again, the sound quality is excellent and it actually complements the Korg by providing terrific drums and some of the most surprising sound effects you'll ever hear. Other features, such as the built in MIDI interface and front panel input for mixing in other sound sources (such as your PC's sound card) make this one of the best sound modules for PC musicians.

If there are any criticism to be made, they are relatively minor. Sound settings can only be saved by sending a MIDI dump rather than using an internal memory.

Turning It Up To Eleven

Face it – you've been bitten by the music bug. You've got your PC, your sound card, all the gubbins – now you just need the instruments. Back to that man Kennedy again...

Keyboards

Choosing a suitable keyboard can be a tricky business, but it's invaluable for use with a sequencer. Even if you can't play a note, a good velocity sensitive keyboard is essential for hammering in drum kit parts. Remember, if the music keyboard doesn't transmit MIDI velocity data, it's not much more useful than a normal QWERTY keyboard.

Master MIDI keyboards start at about £80 for the Novation MIDICon, which looks surprisingly like a BassStation but in white and with no synthesiser parts inside. Like the BassStation it has only two octaves, with two switches to change octave when necessary. If you need more keys, Roland make a good range of keyboards including the PC200 which is a bit of a classic itself (if keyboards which make no noise can be considered classics).

Beyond this, you might be as well to buy a second hand keyboard which does include a synthesiser. It's by no means essential to use a keyboard's sounds — it's only the MIDI information you want — but something like the Roland JX1 also produces very useful sounds in itsr own right. Yamaha's budget keyboard, the SY35, is also a strong contender for most useful affordable keyboard, it includes excellent sounds and a good drum section. Keep a look out for it in the For Sale columns. Other good 'uns include the Kawai K4 and Korg M1 (although check the latter's upgrade status).

Drum machines

With sound modules such as the OR5/W and TG300 around, it's hard to justify dedicated drum machines (sorry, percussion modules). Drum machines are usually rack mounts or small boxes with rubber pads that are designed to generate nothing but drum sounds, as you might expect, really. That's not to say they aren't a necessity in a well equipped studio, the sound quality and added mixing flexibility of devices such as the Alesis D4 or E-Mu Procussion means you'll start to hanker after them eventually. However, some units are also useful because of their built-in rhythm generation features.

Effects

An out-board effects unit is also extremely useful, as it allows you to adjust overall reverb settings for the final recording. Adjusting the reverb enables you to control the apparent distance the instruments are from the listener, as well as provide almost subliminal information on the physical size and type of surroundings. It's something that takes years at recording engineer school to do properly, but of course, that doesn't stop me (and it shouldn't stop you) from having a go.

Recording

Remember the DAT machine? *Tomorrow's World* told us it was going to be the new version of Compact Disc, but high prices and in-built anti- copying technology meant it never was as successful as it deservved to be. Unlike MiniDisc, DAT records sounds as accurately as possible, and is therefore perfect for recording your finished songs. As DAT is a digital format, it can even be recorded directly to CD for the highest possible quality recordings. DAT machines can be bought if you look around, but it's also possible hire them on a daily basis if you aren't going to need one constantly.

If you are using several sound sources, you'll also need a mixing desk. These start out at about £200 for a Phonic 8-into-2, which can mix eight mono or four stereo inputs into one stereo output (for sending to DAT) as well as providing auxiliary channels for passing through the effects processor.

If you want to experiment with multi-track techniques, you can use a special hardware devices to synchronize your MIDI sequencer to the recording tape. This will allow multiple tracks to be built up, and is the perfect way to make the most of your instruments and add and mix vocals professionally. The final multi-track performance can then be re-recorded onto DAT.

For more advanced use, a synchronization standard called SMPTE can be used to lock your sequencer to video and film systems, which means it's possible to record sound tracks or perfectly integrate sound with visuals for music videos.

Steinberg Cubasis

Steinberg ● £149

Cubase is a name that will be familiar to anyone who has dabbled with MIDI sequencers, as Steinberg have built themselves a very enviable reputation over the years. With software available for the Apple Mac and Atari range, by the time Windows versions came along *Cubase* was already a mature and reliable product.

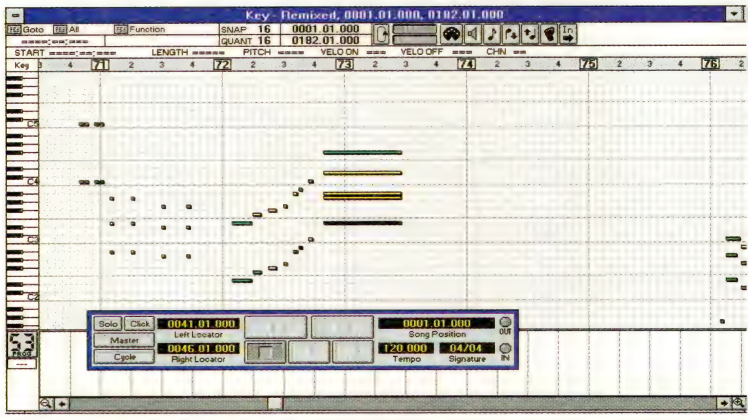
Cubase Lite used to be the name of the Steinberg entry level sequencer, but it has been discontinued in favour of the new and improved *Cubasis* which packs in new features whilst keeping the price firmly towards the budget end of the scale.

The main editing system remains the same, but the number of tracks has been quadrupled from 16 to 64 which provides a lot more scope for building up complicated songs. The MIDI synchronisation features have also been improved, which means it's now possible to link your PC to another sequencer (maybe one on a keyboard, or even running on another computer) and keep time.

Using *Cubasis* is as straighforward as any other sequencer, and it will take a few hours experimenting for you to learn your way about. The tape recorder style control buttons help simplify things.

If your chosen instrument happens to be GM compatible, then you are in for a treat. Not only does *Cubasis* knows each preset by name, but it also provides a complete virtual mixing desk with control over the volume and pan of each track. If you instrument supports the Yamaha XG or Roland GS modes, you can control extra options such as reverb and chorus.

Editing facilites are basic. More advanced features are lacking (as you would expect in a budget level package), but all the tools you really need are in place. Timing problems can be solved with the quantizer, and if you loop a section to over-dub drum parts, you'll appreciate the double-note remove feature. Control changes can be sculpted with the mouse, and if you need total control you'll need to resort to the MIDI List



editor, in which every MIDI event can be fine-tuned. If you understand that business with the tadpoles on the graph paper, the Score Editor will no doubt be extremely useful (I use it for trying out passages from those official group song books), and you can print out your work for your fellow band members if you want.

It's hard to find bad things to say about *Cubasis*, as it packs the essential elements into one cheap little package. It's possible to add an extra WavePlay module for £50 which will control playback of samples (useful for sound effects or media samples), and if you need more power you can upgrade to the full version of *Cubase*.

Also of interest could be *MusicStation* which combines all the features of *Cubasis* but with the addition of pre-arranged music styles. This program costs £199, but includes the WavePlayer system as standard.

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Tea and Synthpathy

The recording industry has undergone many dramatic changes in its short lifetime, and no factor has been more instrumental in this revolution than digital sound synthesis and reproduction. This has been evident in mainstream music ever since seminal German artists Kraftwerk pioneered its use in the mid Seventies. Nowadays, entire musical styles are based around the silicon chip and features such as sampling have become commonplace. The aim of this introduction to sound synthesis is to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of each available system.

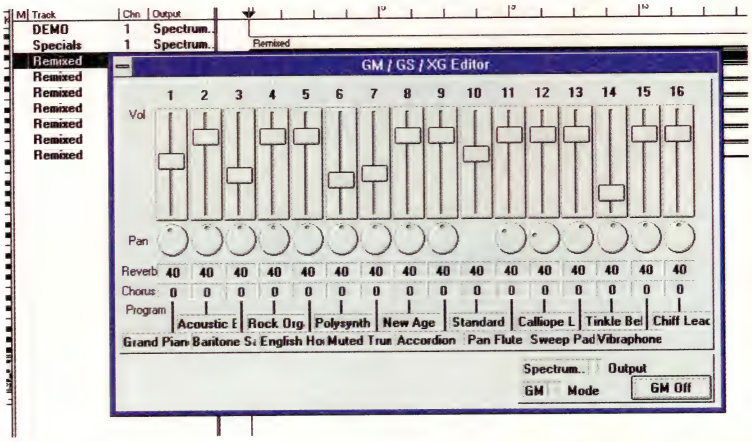
The most straightforward form of digitised sound is digitising or sampling. This records the amplitude (loudness) of a sound at regular time intervals. The process works through a silicon chip called an Analogue/Digital converter which reads a normal analogue sound signal and records its amplitude as a number (digital). The A/D converter takes minutely variable inputs and generalises them into a list of digital readings which the computer can then use, but this process loses some of the sound's original quality.

To explain this principle, consider the most regular sound possible, a sine wave. It is a uniform pattern which involves the amplitude of a sound beginning at its maximum value, falling to zero volume, dropping to negative volume, returning to zero and continuing to maximum volume again. The shape of a sound is known as its wave form. The amount of time between a sound reaching its maximum value and returning to its minimum value is known as the frequency of the wave, and is measured in Hertz (Hz).

Synthesising sine waves is fairly basic and your PC speaker performs it with the minimum of fuss. More complex sounds can be generated by using an A/D converter to record a sound's amplitude over time and thereby create a record of the sound's wave form. Real A/D converters can perform this sampling process up to 48,000 times a second (that's 48kHz – better quality than a CD), which easily covers the human audible range.

Over a period of time, a method of synthesising sounds was developed which involved combining many different shaped waves, all at different frequencies, to create a composite sound. This process is known as modulation and it appears in sound synthesis in two forms, amplitude modulation (AM) and the more complex frequency modulation (FM).

AM combines only the amplitude of two or more wave forms to create a sound which changes over time more unpredictably than our sine wave, whereas FM combines the frequency of multiple waves over time. Using these techniques, complex but repetitive sounds can be generated from a single source wave and multiple modulator waves. FM synthesis has been available on the PC since the early AdLib cards, and the complexity of a sound card's synthesis chip is indicated by the OPL standard. OPL2 FM synthesisers are capable of comparatively simple modulation, whereas the more common OPL3 standard allows quite complex synthesis.



OPL2 and OPL3 allow quite complex sounds to be generated, but the music generated is unmistakably synthesised. Sampled sounds are true to life, but they are not as readily controllable as FM. So what is needed is a marriage of the two processes, and this is the basis of OPL4 wavetable synthesis.

OPL4 takes a recorded sample and applies modulators to it, creating a more flexible sound from the sample. This technique can be heard in the music of artists like Jean-Michel Jarre and The Orb.

Not content with recreating sound faithfully, sonic technology has advanced to the stage where processors are available which can modify the environment in which a sound is intended to be placed. For instance, if you stand in a canyon and shout "hello", the sound will reverberate off any solid objects and return to your ear. This effect, among others, can be recreated using a dedicated chip called a DSP (Digital Signal Processor). These appear in the most expensive of hi-fis and sound cards, and they have begun to make their mark on the PC.

The most expensive cards available for the PC allow wavetable synthesis and digital single processing, but do you need all that from your sound card? If you do, how much are you prepared to pay for the ultimate aural experience?

Glossary

Multi-timbral: Able to play one than one distinct sound at a time
Monophonic: Only able to play one sound at a time.
Polyphonic: Able to play more than one sound at once.
Drum machine: Or a "percussion module", as techno snobs like to call them — dedicated synthesizer for generation drum sounds, and sometimes rhythms too.
DAT: Digital Audio Tape — a very high quality recording medium.
Sampler: A dedicated sample capture and replay system, capable of playing back multiple samples in excellent quality.
Pitch-bend: All MIDI keyboards have a slider at one end which allows notes to be bent upwards or downwards in pitch.
Modulation: Most MIDI keyboards have a dial for altering the "modulation" of a sound, usually by adding a "wah-wah" effect.
MIDI: Musical Instrument Digital Interface
SMPTE: Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, and the name of a tape synchronization standard.
Aftertouch: MIDI control which allows sounds to be altered by pressing down on the keys after the sound has started.
Portamento: The ability to slide the sound up and down between two adjacent notes.
Sequencer: A computer program (or sometimes piece of dedicated hardware, or a feature built into a keyboard) which allows MIDI notes to be captured, edited and replayed.
CV/Gate: Control Voltage and Gate used to be how keyboards were connected in the "old days". MIDI-to-CV converters are useful as they allow old instruments to be used with modern sequencers.

Uh-oh – it's the end of the feature, you're just about to pop down to your local music purveyor to load up with melodic gadgetry, and – yikes! – you can't remember what MIDI stands for. Music Is Definitely It? Martians Invade Decorated Igloos? Fear not – PC Power have more unscrambled acronyms than you could throttle a horse with!

Contacts

Phonic	(0181) 598 8081
E-Mu	(0131) 653 6556
Roland	(01792) 310247
Korg	(0181) 427 5377
Yamaha	(01908) 366700
Novation	(0628) 481992
QuasiMidi	(0245) 344001
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SIMON

Hawks alordy! Simon the dim-witted sorcerer (voiced by Chris Barrie) is back for even more punishment from Sordid, but has the joke worn thin, or is this the funniest game ever seen on the PC? Damian Butt and Steve Hill succumb to the 'head slapping' jokes and visit Adventure soft's HQ in ye olde Birmingham.

No one can doubt the pedigree of Adventure soft, a tiny company who have survived since 1983 by producing high quality, thoughtful adventure games that test and expand the minds of those who play them.

Their distinguished list of titles includes the Fighting Fantasy adventures (*Seas of Blood*, *Rebel Planet* etc), *Elvira I & II*, *Waxworks*, *Fantastic Four*, and of course the massive hit that was *Simon the Sorcerer* last year.

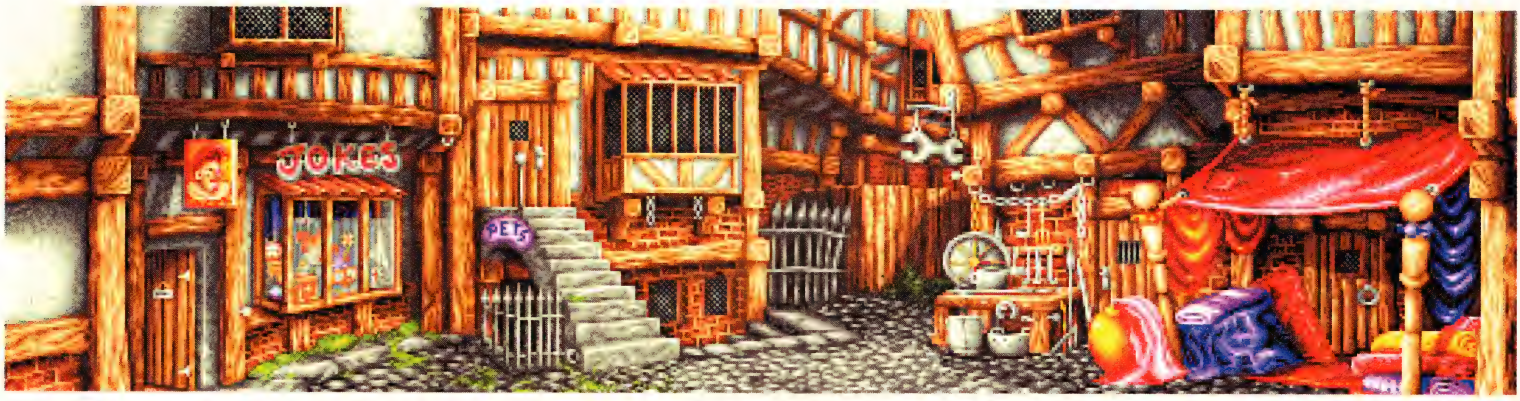
Adventure Soft is really ten or so people, with the founder Mike Woodroffe (a legend in text adventure circles and one of the few remaining independent software producers) driving the whole point 'n' click Berlinetta along from his secluded mock Tudor home on the outskirts of Birmingham.

Why are we telling you all this? Simple. *Simon the Sorcerer II: The Lion, the Wizard and the Wardrobe* is almost complete and it's shaping up to be the biggest and funniest point 'n' click adventure since *Sam & Max* and *Day of the Tentacle*. Who did Adventure soft choose to look at the game first? Us of course, so read on...

Simon the Sorcerer , if you remember, was a full talkie game narrated by *Red Dwarf* and *Brittas Empire* star Chris Barrie (other possibles included David Jason and Harry Enfield) and he's set to do the sequel, along with plenty of other Spitting Image regulars who will give the game a rich and humorous feel.

Each character will have distinct personalities and this is enhanced by ludicrous accents, OTT mannerisms and general linguistic japery. *Simon I* was successful because it was funny, and they certainly haven't forgotten that fact.

SAYS...



Apart from the well established point 'n' click adventures, *Simon II's* only real competition this year is *Discworld* from Psygnosis, which features the extraordinary vocal talents of former Monty Python, Eric Idle, and Jon 'Doctor Gummidge' Pertwee, who take great delight in constantly upstaging each other.

Like *Simon II*, *Discworld* is gorgeous to look at, was written very much with the emphasis on comedy (by Terry Pratchett, based on his Discworld series of books) and looks set to dazzle adventure fans worldwide. The big question is who will win the battle of the bad jokes?

Work on *Simon II* began in August 1993 and both Mike and his son Simon (the game designer and inspiration for the central character) were keen to improve on the original game's interface to make it easier to play and get on with. In addition to the Tithe Barn full of corny gags that Simon encounters at every turn, there are many neat graphical touches, like the way he taps his foot impatiently and even dies of old age if you leave the mouse alone for too long! Such slapstick humour is usually only restricted to children's arcade games like *Sonic the Hedgehog*, but maybe that's just a clever way of introducing new players to the point 'n' click world? It certainly works.

Mike himself admits that the most common problem with *Simon the Sorcerer*, and almost every other adventure, is that you miss objects that are perfectly visible, but not obviously useful. The box of matches, for example, is one of the most common items missed, even though it is right there on the fruit machine in the pub.

Therefore, *Simon II* has a unique function whereby you can press F10 and everything you can click on in the screen is highlighted with a flashing asterisk. Adventure fans will love this feature because now you can make sure you have every object and the game runs without constant annoying breaks. Game writers please note, this is what we expect in all your games from now on.

> **You can't help but question some of the 'logic' – you get rid of the spider in the sewer by giving the Morris dancers a baseball bat, then swapping the accordian player for a cannibal who plays the drums, in order for him to play a rain dance that will cause the heavens to open and wash the spider away. Couldn't you just *tread* on it?**

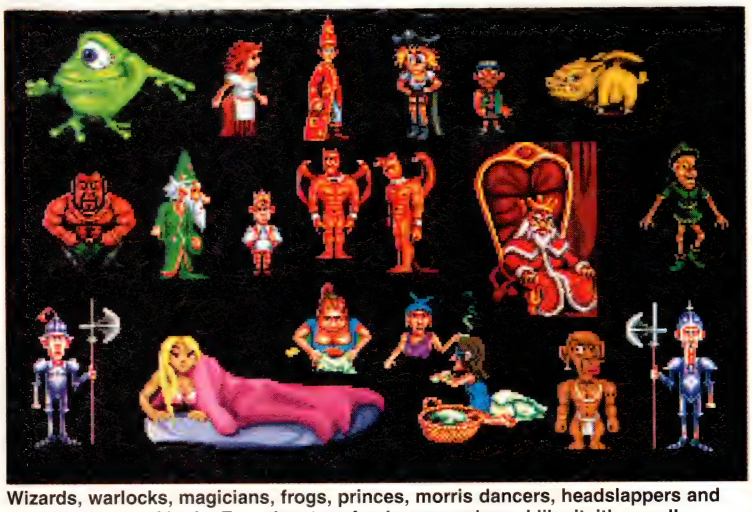
Apart from the 'show items' button, Adventure soft have also added scrolling locations, with characters actually walking behind and around animated sprites (which has not been seen before, ever). The control verbs have been replaced with easy to use icons (a present for 'give', magnifying glass for 'examine' etc), there's a map, a language filter (to edit out swearing, Yah boo sucks!) and a greatly enhanced soundtrack and save game feature. All these additions are as a result of player feedback on the *Simon the Sorcerer* hint line. They *do* listen to your ideas as well as giving advice y'know.

In terms of size, *Simon II* has the same 80-odd locations, but the time it takes to play has been increased two or three fold because every place has an object or a character to interact with. In all there are over 50,000 cells in the game, including hundreds of animations for each of the characters. The Morris dancers, for example, utilise over 300 frames for just a few seconds of animation. Now that's attention to detail for you!

Also, all the familiar characters are back in force, and boy do some of these guys have long memories! The Swampling has now perfected his mud stew and has opened a fast food restaurant (called MucSwamplings, no less). Calypso the magician runs a magic emporium, Max and Gerald (the annoying ones you banished to hell in game one) are the royal baby-sitters, and the woodworms have gone into the carving business. All this makes playing *Simon II* just like returning home.

To be honest, the only problem I found with *Simon II* was that some of the solutions seemed to be a bit, well, obscure for normal people not connected with actually writing the game to work out.

I couldn't help question the 'logic' of getting rid of the spider in the sew-



Wizards, warlocks, magicians, frogs, princes, morris dancers, headslappers and perverse leaps of logic. For adventure freaks everywhere. I like it, it's good!

ers by (are you ready for this?) giving the Morris dancers a baseball bat to replaced their snapped stick, then swapping the accordion player with a cannibal who plays the drums, in order for him to play a rain dance that will cause the heavens to open and the spider to be washed away. Surely you could just tread on it, stab it, shoot it, or nail a stake through its heart? Or am I being stupid? Either way, I can see the *Simon the Sorcerer* helpline needing even more staff when this baby hits the streets.

But hang on a minute, the last thing I knew, Simon had returned home after the arduous journey and adventure in the first game. How the hell did he get back at all? Well for that you'll need the plot, and here it is.

The sequel begins with a young farmer boy, Runt, finding a magic book and becoming the hunched and wretched sidekick of the evil wizard Sordid (the villain from *Simon I*) who plans to bring Simon back to his world and destroy him once and for all.

Unfortunately, the magical transportation device (wardrobe) fails to work and a bemused and highly pissed off Simon is deposited outside Calypso's shop for the beginning of another epic fantasy adventure crammed with more humour than a lorry load of Monty Pythons.

As with the first game, the tasks are varied and usually begin straightforwardly, but then become complicated as Simon gets embroiled with the other characters in the game. *Simon II* starts out with the young sorcerer searching for the Mucusade (surely you mean Lucoza... what do you mean copyright infringement – ah I see) to generate the 1.21 gigawatts of power the wardrobe needs to get him home.

On the way through the picturesque city, crammed with animated locations such as the Three Bear's Cottage, Docks and Morris Dancers' square, Simon must become the King's wizard to gain entry to the treasury where the Mucusade is stored. Unfortunately, he is kidnapped and press-ganged onto a pirate ship. You just know this is going to be a bitch of a day...

There is no doubt that *Simon the Sorcerer II* will be one heck of a good game, and fans of the previous game (and indeed all of Adventure soft's products) will immediately find it much better than the original. With *Discworld* arriving in March, *Simon II* will face stiff competition, but it will be up to you to decide which is the ultimate point 'n' click adventure.

Discworld is reviewed this issue on page 44 and *Simon II* will be reviewed and featured exclusively on the cover of next issue. Release date is April and it will cost £39.99 for the floppy version and £44.99 for CD. Until then, drool over these screen shots and start saving.

The unfortunate farmer boy, Runt, is given the task of returning Simon to Sordid using a wardrobe, obviously. There he is, looking wretched.

PC Power speaks to Simon Woodruffe, the game's designer.

PC Power: The plot and characters in *Simon II* are, to say the least, a bit mad. Where do you get your ideas from (and no, I don't mean they are transported to the brain via electrical nerve impulses)?

Simon Woodruffe: I guess they are all based on people I know and on variations of characters from other sources, and then wildly exaggerated in most cases. It definitely helps to read and watch a lot of comedy. Sometimes you can suddenly have an idea which you think is totally original and then someone comes along and points out where it's from. In the first game, one of my friends pointed out that the Woodworm are based on the classic comedy, *Citizen Smith*, although this had never occurred to me before.

PCP: Is Simon based directly on you, or is he a combination of comic characters?

SW: Embarrassingly enough, Simon has a lot in common with the way myself and a group of friends used to behave at school. He's really a special blend and roast of the worst elements in all of us.

PCP: Where did the idea of *Simon the Sorcerer* first come from?

SW: It was on the M5 southbound, just past Bristol. Someone suggested writing a game for children and this eventually transformed into the game. When Simon was first invented, I didn't really have much of an idea what he was like, but as time has gone by he has developed into a much stronger character.

PCP: What was the first step in writing *Simon II*? Did you already have a plot mapped out, or was it a case of nicking ideas from established comedies?

SW: Towards the end of *Simon I*, I was thinking of classic legends/stories to put into *Simon II* when I suddenly thought of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. It struck me that by changing the Witch to Wizard, then you had the basis for a sequel.

PCP: Simon is trapped on a desert island in the game, what three things would you take with you if you were in the same situation?

SW: Suncream, beer and cigarettes.

PCP: Was it your decision as to who would play the voice of Simon? Was Chris Barrie your first choice?

SW: We had a number of names in the pipeline (including Rowan Atkinson and Rob Newman), but the favourite was always Chris. Cost has absolutely nothing to do with it... honest!

PCP: Everyone always says that designing games is an easy life. Did you have any trouble thinking of ideas and were you ever scared of dying on-screen (comedy-wise)?

SW: Whilst my boss doesn't seem to understand this, I find that you can spend three weeks trying to write something and get nowhere and then spend on afternoon writing a quarter of the game. I wasn't ever really scared because I didn't expect it to go down as well as it did.

PCP: Why doesn't Simon ever bite the dust in either of the games? Is this a conscious effort to set a good example, or would you really like to see him mangled sometime?

SW: This is because there is absolutely no point in Simon dying. He gets mangled, incinerated, squashed, shot at, and drowned quite a lot in *Simon II*. Realistically, most of these would result in his death, but I don't see any point in punishing a player and forcing him to restart from a saved game.

PCP: You've just finished *Simon II* – what's the best bit in your opinion?

SW: I was rather pleased with the dialogue between the role-players that Simon meets late in the game (outside the Goblin camp – Ed), and the three bears section works really well.

PCP: What of *Simon III*? Have the jokes run out, or like *Back to the Future 2*, have you already started shooting the sequel? Tell me about the space adventure game that's in the pipeline?

SW: There are plans to do *Simon III* after we've had a break for a while. The plot has been left open at the end of *Simon II*. The space game is simply a change of genre for us (as everyone is a bit bored of fantasy). It might be called *Greetings from Planet Earth*, but I'm not totally sure yet.

PCP: Finally, who is *Simon the Sorcerer II* aimed at and do you have any special messages for fans of the first game?

SW: I'd like to think that every age group would enjoy it. Judging by *Simon I* and the response we've received from people, it goes down best with under 16s and over 25s. We seem to have a block with the 16-25 age group, although maybe this is because they aren't as likely to write letters of praise as the others.

Special messages? Er... thanks a lot, I guess. Oh yeah, buy the second one – it's much better.

PCP: Thank you.

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RESOL

children of the LUTION

SVGA – what is it? A new three-in-one hair treatment perhaps? The latest panty liner with wings possibly? Er, no, a hi-res screen mode actually. But is it a vital addition to your home PC, or just a fancy gimmick? Tony Kaye explains...

To Super VGA or not to Super VGA? That is the question. These days you can't open up a review and not be bombarded by some dazzling screenshot or other (usually taken from the rendered intro), but just what does Super VGA add to a game, and how much hardware do you need to make the most of it?

SVGA stands for Super Video Graphics Array and this refers to a screen of more than 256 colours using an 800x600 or up to 1024x768 pixels graphics mode. In short it means clearly defined graphics and a virtual end to the blocky pixellated look of most PC games; *Doom 2* is a prime example.

SVGA games like Virgin's *NASCAR* racing certainly looks tasty, but unless you've got a top spec machine with a SVGA monitor and suitable video card you are not going to be touching their potential. And what's worse, you always know some smart arse who's already got a Pentium and likes to brag about the size of his resolution. Fortunately, there is a solution.

Video cards are dramatically dropping in price and provided you have a decent enough clock speed, the world of hi-res racing and smooth contoured space travel is only a fistfull of tenners away. PC Power recommends the Orchid Fahrenheit 64 true colour video card at around £150. Contact Orchid on (01256) 479898. This is one of the best cards on the market, but if you want to see more, check out the pages of PC BUYER (bundled FREE with PC POWER every month) or keep your eyes peeled in the Technical section for more reviews of the latest kit.

But before spending your hard-earned cash on a new game, it's vital to check on the hardware requirements and make sure that your machine measures up. Until recently, the majority of games would run on any 486 and most 386 based machines, but with video sequences and SVGA graphics, the limits are being stretched. *Wing Commander III*, for example, demands a minimum of a 486DX-50 processor and 8Mb of RAM.

A full installation requires a massive 38Mb of hard disk space plus a 20Mb swap file! Of course, you can carry on playing with your old machine, but you'll miss out on the smooth graphics and animated sequences and you may lose the audio action.

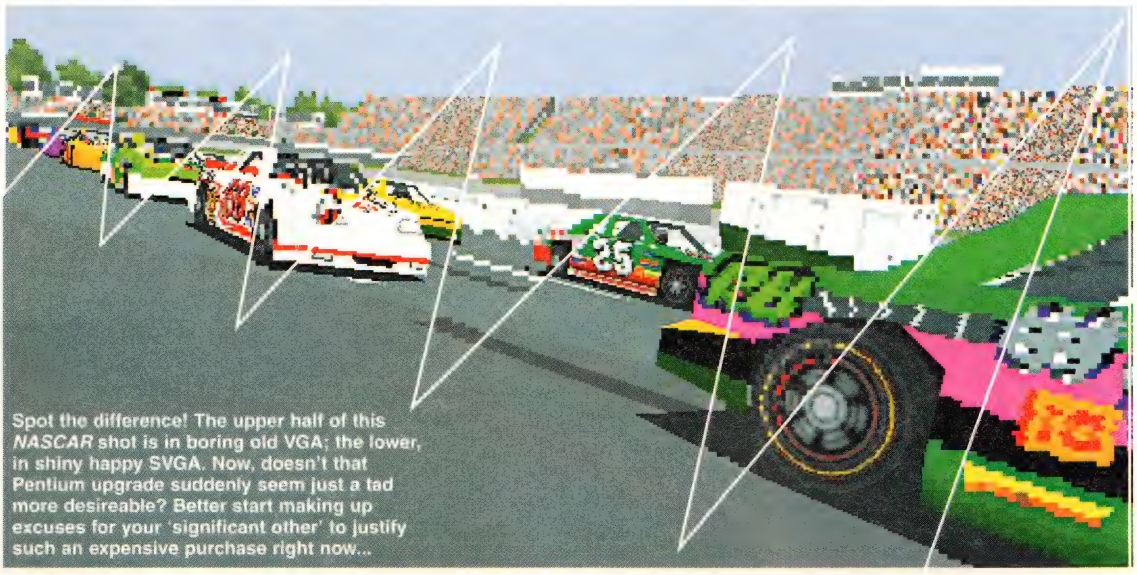
With hardware prices falling, the trend towards faster and more demanding games is inevitable and it won't be too long before the minimum requirement is a 486DX-66 processor, 16Mb RAM, VESA local bus or PCI graphics and 16-bit digital capabilities for sound.

So what can you do to keep up? If you're thinking of upgrading your computer or perhaps considering a first purchase then it's important to know what to look for. Of course, your decision is going to be influenced by the cash you have, and some things can be added later rather than sooner. It's a matter of priorities.

It won't be enough to just upgrade your processor, as games are demanding more hard disk space, available memory, graphics handling and sound. Some of these can be added to your existing system in a logical upgrade path. For example, you can add a good quality sound card, graphics card or more memory to a 386 and upgrade the processor later. The golden rule is get the best you can afford and read the reviews before parting with your money.

Each of the games overleaf have been run on a slower machine (486SX-25), a reasonably powerful computer (486DX-66) and a Pentium 60, and the results have been logged. It is not intended to present a blinding technical feature, so I've given each game a playability rating from one to ten to give you an indication of what you can expect and what to look for in your new computer. In general, the higher the mark, the better it runs, but read the comments along with each score for more detailed information.

Please remember that these scores are not intended to represent a review of the games. They are an indication of how playable (or otherwise) they may be on the different computers. I take no responsibility for the quality of the games themselves, but obviously I have my own personal favourites, so I make no apologies for any of the comments...



Spot the difference! The upper half of this *NASCAR* shot is in boring old VGA; the lower, in shiny happy SVGA. Now, doesn't that Pentium upgrade suddenly seem just a tad more desireable? Better start making up excuses for your 'significant other' to justify such an expensive purchase right now...

wing commander III (electronic arts)

This is one of a range of 'Interactive Movies' that are emerging from the software houses now. Some of them will still perform, as the action is not too intense, but this one also offers SVGA graphics and is almost impossible to play if the processor is too slow. VGA options are provided but a lot is lost from the game itself. A large hard disk is required as the game creates a 20Mb swap file on the drive to use as a buffer for the graphics and speech.

Unfortunately for non-ninja PC owners, *WCIII* is totally unplayable on the SX machine. The DX is OK, but can be slow when there's a lot of action in SVGA mode. The Pentium machine plays well and all of the scenes and action sequences are smooth in all modes.

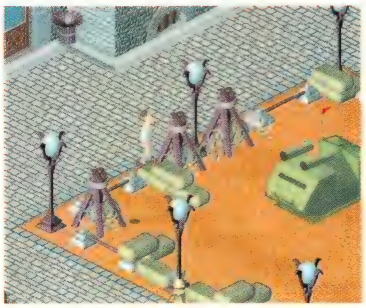
system specs

MINIMUM 486DX-50, 8Mb RAM, 20Mb hard disk space, 256 colour VGA card, double speed CD-ROM drive, SoundBlaster or compatible.

RECOMMENDED Pentium, 16Mb RAM, 50Mb hard disk space, VL Bus graphics card, top end sound card (AWE32, Gravis Ultrasound Max or similar).

486SX-25	N/A
486DX-66	★ ★
PENTIUM	★ ★ ★ ★

little big adventure (electronic arts)



When you set up *LBA*, it asks for your graphics card so it can make use of its speed. Although it'll run quite happily on a slower machine, you really need at least a 50Mhz clock speed to make it bearable. This is my favourite game at the moment, but I'm sure it wouldn't be if I only had a 386!

This game is full of very high quality graphics which can be a little tedious if the computer is not up to it. At a reasonable speed, it becomes a joy to play, but can get difficult to control if the machine is too fast. The graphics are simply stunning and truly this game makes the most of the SVGA screen mode. You only have to watch the intro for example to know just what PCs can do, and the whole game resembles a superbly rendered *Knight Lore*.

system specs

MINIMUM 486SX-25, 4Mb RAM, 11Mb hard disk space, VESA compatible 256 colour SVGA card, double speed CD-ROM drive, SoundBlaster or compatible.

RECOMMENDED 486DX2-66, 8Mb RAM, 40Mb hard disk space, MIDI compatible sound card.

486SX-25	★ ★
486DX-66	★ ★ ★
PENTIUM	★ ★ ★ ★

magic carpet (electronic arts)

As with *Wing Commander*, you can select the level of play with *Magic Carpet*, so you can cut the quality to improve the speed. There is no comparison, however, between the highest and lowest settings when you include options like shadows, motion blur and so on. This is the first game that optimises itself when it detects a Pentium chip, offering a whole new range of options and a nifty, if unnecessary, Pentium logo screen.

Magic Carpet becomes a whole new game when played on a Pentium computer. The action is very jerky if you try to set the graphics too high for the machine you're using. The SVGA here is also stunning and indeed *Magic Carpet* is a party piece all over the world. "Hey guys, come and have a look at this."

system specs

MINIMUM 486SX25, 4Mb RAM, 2Mb hard disk space, VGA card, SoundBlaster or compatible.

RECOMMENDED 486SX50 (Pentium enhanced), 16Mb RAM, VESA compatible video driver, double speed CD-ROM drive.

486SX-25	
486DX-66	★ ★ ★
PENTIUM	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

under a killing moon (us gold)

When this game was launched, it was as much of a step forward as *7th Guest* was when it was released. The good news is, being an adventure, the pace is slow enough to be very playable on a slower machine. Obviously, as you'd expect, gameplay is improved with a faster processor.

Once a certain level is reached, however – and the game is quite happy with a 486DX-33 – there is no need for anything more to get the best results. So, if you're looking for an excuse to splash out on that Pentium you've been promising yourself, this isn't it. A major part of the atmosphere in this game is the graphics; after all, it would be very difficult to place you in a Philip Marlow role if your office resembled the set of *Playaway*!

system specs

MINIMUM 386DX-25, 4Mb RAM, 10Mb hard disk space, VESA compatible SVGA card, single speed CD ROM drive, SoundBlaster or compatible.

RECOMMENDED 486, 16Mb RAM, Local Bus SVGA card, 16-bit sound card.

486SX-25	★ ★ ★
486DX-66	★ ★ ★ ★
PENTIUM	★ ★ ★ ★

nascar racing (virgin)

Two separate specifications are listed for *Nascar Racing*, VGA and SVGA. Believe it or not, the SVGA installation actually takes up a little over half the hard disk space that the VGA version requires! There is a world of difference between the two, but the game is only just playable on a DX2 in SVGA mode without reducing the quality. I actually tried to run the full SVGA version on a 486SX-25, but even the intro sequence was too slow to watch, let alone the game itself.

If you play this game on a very fast machine in SVGA mode, you'll find it extremely hard to go back to the VGA version. Playing it on a 25Mhz however is a futile waste of time.

system specs

MINIMUM VGA – 386DX-33, 6Mb RAM, 15Mb hard disk space. SVGA – 486DX2-66, 8Mb RAM, 8Mb hard disk space.

RECOMMENDED VGA – 486DX2-66, VLB or PCI graphics card. SVGA – Pentium 90, VLB or PCI SVGA card.

486SX-25	
486DX-66	★ ★
PENTIUM	★ ★ ★

CONCLUSIONS

If you are serious about games and you're buying a new computer, it is hard to recommend going for anything less than a 486DX2-66. I'm still unconvinced that the Pentium 60 is worthwhile for most games until authors write more Pentium specific code, but, there's always the DX4! The bottom line is that unless you're upgrading your machine anyway to, you better get with the program and invest in a decent video card. Without it, all the new games will just seem dowdy, and certainly once you've tasted SVGA, you can never go back...

PC POWER

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Discw

Wearing a dress and being Idle all day is only a small part of being a wizard. Damian Butt dons the floppy hat.

CD REVIEW

GOOD EVENING. MY NAME IS DEATH AND I'LL BE TAKING YOU THROUGH THIS REVIEW OF TERRY PRATCHETT'S *DISCWORLD*, BASED ON HIS SERIES OF NOVELS. THE GRAPHICS ARE INCREDIBLE, QUITE THE MOST BREATHTAKING PIECE OF FINE ART I'VE EVER SEEN, AND THE SOUND IS SIMPLY TERRIFIC, WITH MESSRS IDLE, PERTWEE AND ROBINSON ENHANCING THE UNPARALLELED GAMEPLAY...[CUT!. Hmm, wait a minute, something's wrong with Death.]

Sorry about that, but after a lengthy and quite frankly brutal trial, it was revealed that Death had taken a bribe to embellish the review. I will now be taking over as master of ceremonies. I thank you. Now where were we?

Discworld from Psygnosis is an adaptation of Terry Pratchett's series of novels based on the world that endlessly floats through space on the back of four elephants riding on a giant turtle, A'Tuin. The books are hilarious and contain some of the most wacky characters ever to appear in print. The big question is, can Rincewind, the Luggage and his pals successfully make the leap from paper to screen?

The librarian of the Unseen University is a monkey, so try not to mention anything about primates or he'll go ape – whoops! (thwack)

The answer is an unquestionable yes. *Discworld* is a rip-roaring, belly-aching comical helter-skelter that will both enthral fans of the books and captivate *Discworld* virgins. The graphics are simply gob-smacking and the hand-painted backgrounds for such levels as the street and the library are incredible, truly evoking a deep and rich 3-D feel.

The game is a full talkie, in the same vein as *Simon the Sorcerer*, with you playing Rincewind, a cowardly and sarcastic wizard, voiced magnificently by former *Monty Python* star Eric Idle. This is the perfect man for the job, as he has exactly the right tone, and plays most of the game as his Sir Robin character from *The Holy Grail*.

Further vocal support comes from Tony Robinson of *Black Adder* fame, but even though his characters are incredibly varied, poor old Tony still comes across as Baldrick with a cold. Jon Pertwee, erstwhile Dr Who, is good as the old git contingent, but he struggles to escape the "cuppa tea and a slice of cake" type-casting of *Wurzel Gummidge*. Well cast is Kate Robbins, who is always right on the button with her female voices.

Does this pedigree of voices enhance the game? Without a doubt, because now the humorous dialogue is spoken and not

orld

You begin the bedroom with the dragon curled around the spire outside.

just read, adding immeasurably to the atmosphere of the game. *Simon the Sorcerer II* is also set to storm the adventure charts soon, but one must ask the question, will people vote for Rimmer or this comedy cavalcade? Or both?

As with the books, Pratchett has stuck close to his comic roots, bunging in as many one-liners and visual Benny Hill gags (the Hublander chest maiden for example) as possible. The dialogue is thick and fast, but suffers from irritating pauses and disjointed sentences in places. I can only assume this is because they recorded each performer's speech separately and then spliced it together at the last minute.

Despite this, the game flows freely and there's plenty to see and do. At the beginning you are asleep in the Unseen University, and from here you must wake up the Luggage (using something long and hard) to act as a convenient storage space (you can place as many objects in here as you want, but Rincewind can only hold two things). You must then get a book for the Archchancellor from the librarian who has been turned into a monkey (apparently he could have been changed back, but liked it so much he chose not to be).

"Jon Pertwee struggles to escape his "cuppa tea and a slice of cake" Wurzel Gummidge type-casting..."

As with all point 'n' click adventures, you much search the screen for useful objects and people to interact with, but I must say it is very annoying when you miss a key object and then find you're stumped later on. In these cases it would have been better to have had a 'reveal' feature.

When you encounter another person in the game, clicking on them automatically begins a gay banter that culminates in a speech menu, not constructed of sentences, but tones of voice. If you want to retort humorously, then you simply click on the joker icon, and likewise for moody, questioning and happy. Sadly, this interface is a little pointless, as in many cases it doesn't matter what you say because there are so many red herrings in the game. Most characters, like the old gits in the dining room, simply ramble their way into obscurity. When this happens you wish you could simply leave, rather than having to click through their endless waffling monologues.

The adventure itself concerns the ridding of a huge red dragon (seen curled around the tower outside your bedroom window), but first you must construct a dragon detector from normal household appliances. As it happens, the puzzles in *Discworld* are not too ludicrous most of the time, with some, like the magic staff and pick-pocket ability, unfolding easily. Others, however, are simply too obscure for any mere human to fathom out. Who for example would guess that you had to use the ladder to climb up to a tiny window in the university with a butterfly net to catch the cook's pancake, causing him to complain to the Archchancellor and leaving the way open for you to get the frying pan. What? I ask you – is that logical?

Discworld is a funny and graphically sumptuous adventure game that perfectly translates the printed brilliance of Pratchett's work. The characters are extremely well developed (often many of the people turn up again and again the further you get), and the speech is some of the best I've ever heard.

Adventure purists will complain that there isn't enough true interaction with the inhabitants of Ankh Morpork, but the game more than makes up for that with twist after comic twist. You'd be hard pushed to find a better graphical adventure on the PC today.

ALTERNATIVES

SIMON THE SORCERER
Adventuresoft ● £34.99 ● 94%
At least as funny and original to boot. Look out for the sequel soon.

SAM & MAX
US Gold ● £39.99 ● 83%
One of the best and finniest point 'n click adventures on the PC.

DAY OF THE TENTACLE
US Gold ● £39.99 ● 95%
The ultimate in silliness, amazing entertainment. It's great! (Wibble)

The owls are not what they seem! Rincewind encounters a furry friend in the dark forest later in the game. Note the Luggage following your every move.

DISCWORLD

Publisher
Psygnosis
Tel: (0151) 709 5755
£49.99

Minimum System
386DX-33MHz, 4Mb RAM, SoundBlaster or compatible sound card, CD-ROM drive. Mouse recommended

For
Perfectly suited speech
Graphics to die for
Long lasting like no other
A brilliant book conversion

Against
Some puzzles too obscure
Not enough true interaction

88%

Descent

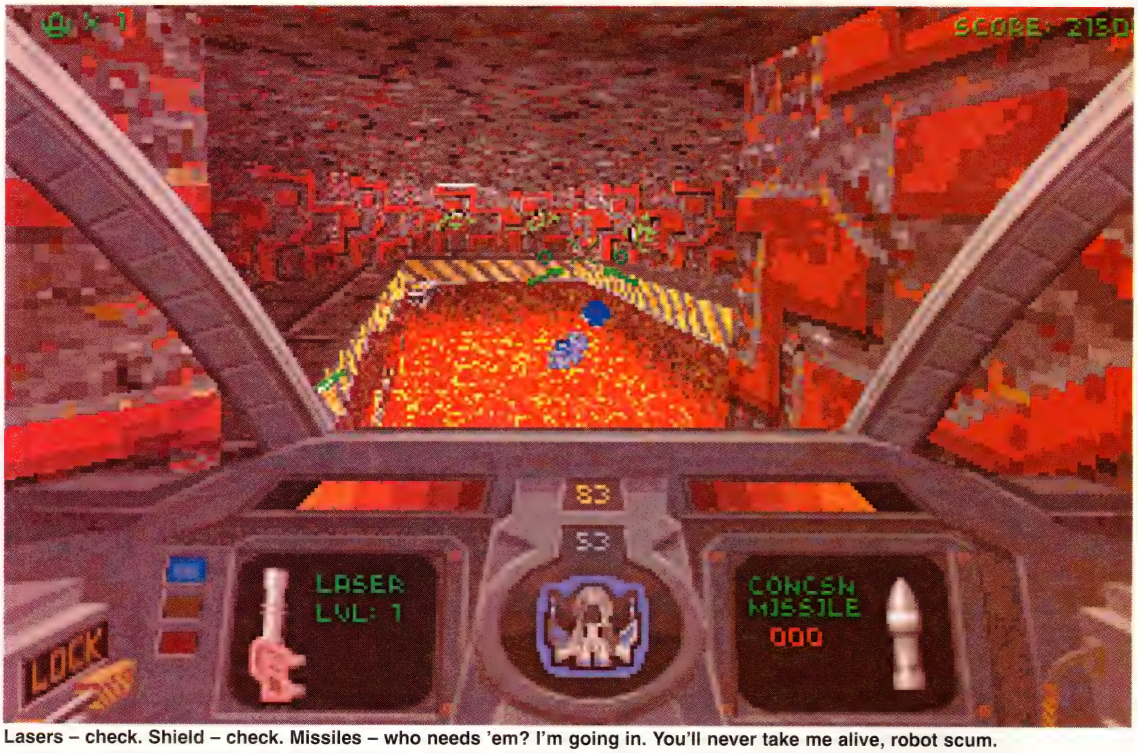
HD REVIEW

PC POWER PLATINUM AWARD

There's descent in the ranks as Steve Hill, our new recruit, tackles *Doom* in a spaceship.

Mineral Corporation's mining station has fallen into the hands of a horde of rebellious robots and it is down to you to infiltrate and destroy it. Failure to do so will lead to the eventual destruction of Earth, mankind and life as we know it.

No worries mate, you are a cold-blooded killer with the latest in hardware to help you, not to mention the incentive of triple-pay on Sundays! This is the gist of the (far from brief) briefing at the beginning of the game, which is given by some slap-head in a suit before you are finally unleashed on your mission.



Lasers – check. Shield – check. Missiles – who needs 'em? I'm going in. You'll never take me alive, robot scum.

Pyro mania

All you really need to know is that you're in charge of a mother of a ship (an Israeli-made Pyro-Gk if you're interested) and stuck down a mine shaft with orders to shoot on sight and, if you're feeling humane, rescue a few hostages.

This isn't any old mine though, being inhabited by a variety of unpleasant robots, all equipped with more than adequate means of blowing you away. Fortunately you're not exactly shy of firepower yourself and you've got both primary and secondary weapons to go fragging with.

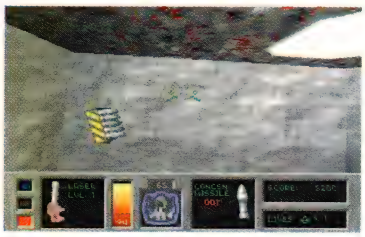
These are initially Lasers and Concussion Missiles, but as you cruise around the mine shafts you can get tooled up with such delights as Vulcan Cannons, Homing Missiles, Spreadfire Cannons, Proximity Bombs, Plasma Cannons, Smart Missiles, Fusion Cannons and even a Mega Missile, whatever that might be.

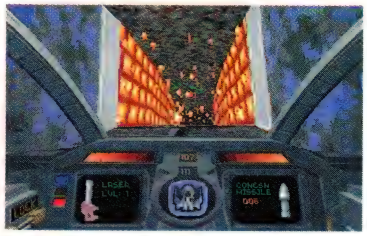
In the time honoured video game tradition there are also plenty of power-ups to collect in the myriad of tunnels – an energy boost, for example, will recharge your weapons system and a shield boost will maintain your all-important shield level.

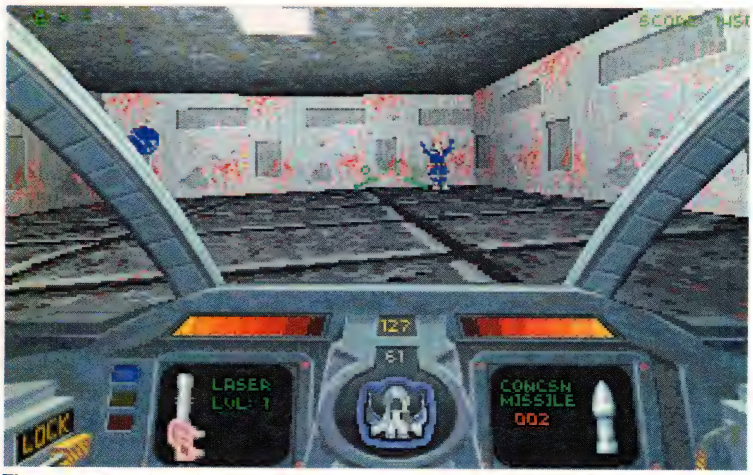
Other items to be found in the game include a cloaking device a la *Star Trek*, and an invulnerability icon.

> ***Descent* evokes a dank, claustrophobic atmosphere reminiscent of *Alien 3*, albeit without Brian Glover, or an alien, or that bald woman...**

The most crucial things to collect are the colour-coded access keys. These give you entry to


Re-stock your supply of concussion missiles for added firepower.

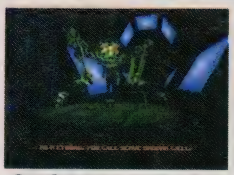

Flying through the energy zone restores energy level to maximum.



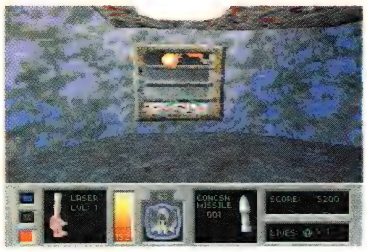
There are a number of hostages hidden somewhere in each level. Feel free to rescue them, if you can face the excrement-stained walls.

ALTERNATIVES

DOOM 2
Virgin ● £34.99 ● 95%
There is no better shoot-'em-up available at the moment.


SYSTEM SHOCK
EA ● £44.99 ● 94%
The thinking man's *Doom*. An absolute must for *Aliens* fans

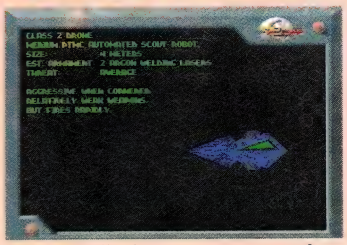
QUARANTINE
Gametek ● £39.99 ● 85%
Basically a game version of *Escape from New York* (in a taxi).



Unleash your arsenal of weapons on the fusion reactor and get the hell out!

DESTROY HIM, MY ROBOTS!

Standard cannon-fodder in plentiful supply on early levels.



More preliminary target practice, but watch out for their lasers.

Sneaky beast who creeps up behind you and shreds your ship.

Pretty nasty piece of work. Takes a lot of shooting to destroy.

Even nastier big brother who can do you some serious damage.

Appears on later levels and can take chunks out of your shield.

the part of the complex that contains the all-important fusion reactor, the shooting of which will result in a Death Star-style destruction of the entire mine.

Unfortunately, once you have taken out the reactor you have just 50 seconds to get your homeboy ass out of the place. Consequently, it is advisable to know the whereabouts of the emergency exit and to clear yourself a route beforehand. There is also an automap function, but it only shows you where you have already been rather than where you need to go. Should you succeed in destroying the mine and escaping in time, you will be bucked into space and immediately transported to another, more difficult, mine. It isn't easy being a mercenary.

Mr Tyler! Going... down?

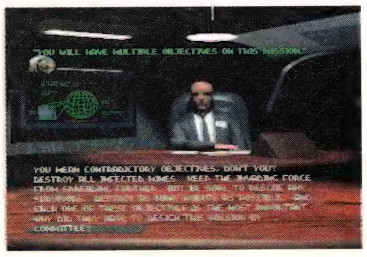
For in-the-cockpit, in-yer-face 3-D action, *Descent* is a winner. It comes with a full range of control options, including the mouse, although piloting Beelzebub's steel vulture of death with a small plastic rodent doesn't feel quite right. This is more of a sweaty joystick, lurching around in your seat, type of game. It is far more than a straightforward shoot-'em-up though. The labyrinthine complexities of the mines test your memory as much as your trigger finger, and discovering the many hidden rooms and passages is an important part of the game.

Superb 3-D graphics evoke a dank, claustrophobic atmosphere reminiscent of *Alien 3*, albeit without Brian Glover, or an alien, or that bald woman. A degree of cunning and stealth is required, as you find yourself peering around corners before launching a full-scale assault.

There is full surround sound in this game, so you can often hear your foes before they loom into view and this makes it all the more scary. With a decent stereo set-up you can actually determine their angle of approach to buy yourself a few crucial seconds reaction time. A 'reverse stereo' option is included in case your speakers are wrongly aligned. These guys think of everything.

The five available difficulty levels ensure that *Descent* will provide lasting value. Trainee level is equivalent to a Sunday drive in the country, with the occasional appearance of a robot providing some light relief. Conversely, the top level, Insane, usually results in you being blown to fragments as soon as you're out of the starting gate! There is also a full range of multi-player options for those cosy get-togethers, as well as the option to save between stages to prevent you going over old ground.

Descent is a *Die Hard* of a game that takes the *Doom* engine to new heights. It's super smooth and exhilarating to play from start to finish. Definitely worth a look.



With the fusion reactor destroyed, the mine is about to blow. There is no time for sightseeing as you frantically head for the exit to avoid instant death.

DESCENT

Publisher
Interplay
Tel: (01235) 821666
£39.99

Minimum System
386 (486 recommended), 4Mb RAM, VGA.
Supports mouse, all major soundcards.

For
Smooth 3-D graphics
Excellent stereo sound
Wide range of difficulty levels

Against
Frustrating if you get lost
Slightly repetitive

93%

Psycho Pinball

CD REVIEW

HD REVIEW

The peace of the office is shattered as a psycho runs amok! Keith Pullin goes deaf, dumb and blind.

This crazy, noisy, finger thumper is untouchable on the Mega Drive. But does it titillate the more refined PC user as much as it tickles the fancy of the easy-to-please console owner?

Images of pinballs with carving knives immediately sprang to mind when the box was picked up, but a brief spell at the helm of one of the fastest, smoothest pinball games ever to be released on the PC soon dispelled any wayward thoughts of silhouetted figures behind shower curtains.

In a nutshell, the gameplay and options make this shine brighter than *Pinball Dreams, Pinball Dreams Deluxe* and *Pinball Fantasies* put together.

There are four tables to choose from; Psycho, Wild West, Trick or Treat and The Abyss, all packed full of brightly coloured buzzers, bumpers and brick walls. The top speed setting sends your ball ricocheting off million point accumulators at such an unbelievable speed, you'll need to pin your eyelids open so you can't blink! The lower speed settings are still fast (there are five of them in all), so take heed – you need to be a professional to reach the hundred million mark on this thunderbolt of a game.

> **"Play me until your fingers are raw!"**

By all means have a bash if you're not used to pinball, but don't be surprised to find yourself cursing the game to hell.

They call him Flipper

If you don't know how to keep the ball going through the many loops and ramps that you find in abundance on every table, it will somehow sense your incompetence and mercilessly reject your ball, before you've even managed to reach your first bonus room.

These appear on every table and are normally found by lighting up certain areas on the table. You can illuminate other sections of the table which leads to some frantic multi-ball action, which in itself is a such a rare occurrence on pinball simulations, that it encouraged me to leap out of my seat shouting words to the effect of "Hallelujah!"

A good indication as to whether a pinball game will hold your attention is the amount of on-screen diversions and features. *Psycho Pinball* takes all the best and most exhilarating aspects of pinball, such as multiple flippers, stepped bonuses, and directional nudging, slots them all into the game with some slick programming and says "Play me until your fingers are raw!"

It isn't easy to escape *Psycho Pinball*'s addictive gameplay and alluring whines and beeps. If you're hammering it out with a few friends, you can just kiss the evening good-bye! It's a party game through and through, the frenzied music adding to the thrill. As for the sound effects – well, they're just pure pinball.

Codemasters have confirmed their superior powers of writing unbelievably addictive software. This will drag you back for more, months after you've flipped your first flipper – as far as PC pinball goes, you can't beat it.

ALTERNATIVES

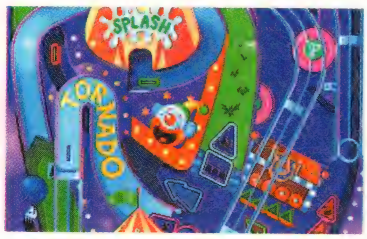
PINBALL DREAMS
21st Century ● £37.99 ● NR
The first of the series, four tables but not enough features.

PINBALL DREAMS DELUXE
21st Century ● £39.99 ● NR
More colours and more excitement.

PINBALL FANTASIES
21st Century ● £37.99 ● 80%
The second best pinball game for the PC.

There's nothing like going for a rocky ride down the rodeo ramp.

You're fired straight into the boiling pot in this game. Make sure you don't take a trip down the side chutes though or there will be no treat tonight.



PSYCHO PINBALL

Publisher
Codemasters
Tel: (01926) 814 132
HD £39.99/CD £44.99

Minimum System
386/25 SX, 4Mb RAM, 256 colour VGA
Supports all major sound cards, do not need mouse or joystick

For
Highly addictive
1-4 players
Clearly marked features
Bonus games

Against
Will eventually become repetitive

90%

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As the Comanche shudders into life, a different kind of blade is aimed at the President of the United States of America.

In *Desert Strike,* General Kilbaba – the Desert Madman – was successfully wiped from the face of the Earth, giving humanity a chance to breath easy once more. The trouble with nutters though, is they always have sons bent on revenge. Kilbaba Jr. is one such fledgling and his mission, more deadly than his father's ever was, is quite simply to nuke the United States of America.

With a powerful drug lord, Carlos Ortega, supplying the shooters, the good old US of A is facing a crisis worse than a multi-billion dollar trade deficit or California sinking into the Pacific Ocean – but then, that's not all bad. After all, David Hasselhoff and the entire cast of *Baywatch* (barring a certain blonde) would stay out of my television.

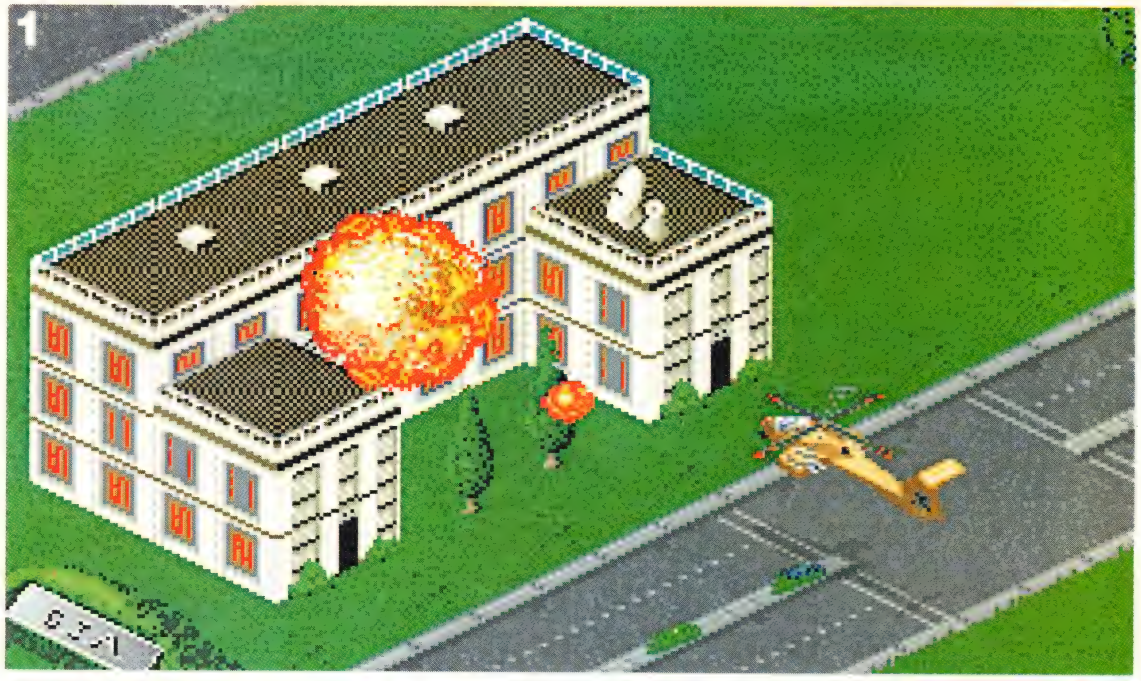
The game begins and you're thrown into an overacted, *Eldorado* type FMV introduction that's so full of cheesy grins it makes you wonder whether it was filmed on location at Gremlin itself. At least you're given an idea of exactly what is expected of you in order to stop these crazy dogs from turning America into a flame- grilled whopper!

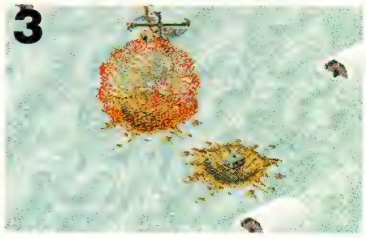
At first, you'll be plummeting to the ground in flames as often as you are blasting the enemy...

Hippy terror

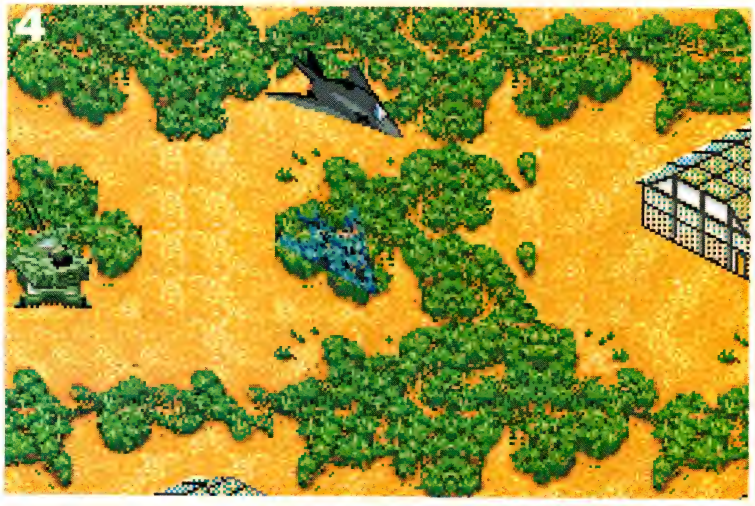
A couple of options screens allow you to fiddle around with the screen size, sound options and choose a winch man. You can then fire up the Comanche and head off into a 3-D isometric maze of a town, more commonly known as Washington DC. These terrorists dive straight in at the deep at end. They have cunningly disguised themselves as hippies by driving around the streets of the capital in armoured VW camper vans.

The first weapon to test out is the chain gun. The accuracy of this depends on the winch man you chose at the menu stage. In fact, this is not entirely true to life, as on the real Comanche the gun is computer controlled. Never mind, the winch man aspect still adds a little extra spice to the proceedings, with some of them plucking crates off the ground a lot more skilfully than they shoot ducks out of the sky.





1 All right, so theoretically I'm not meant to blow up the CIA HQ. I guess that's the mission over, right? What incredible acting, shame it came out just after the Oscar nominations. This punk is about to make a scientist's day very miserable indeed. **3** New and innovative ways of clearing snow are always welcome in the cold reaches of the arctic, so melt away, matey. **4** Sneak around the jungle in the Stealth fighter.



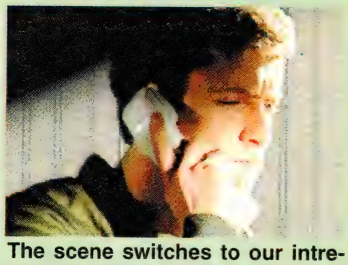
You may think that swinging a winch around is not as important as popping off terrorists. Not so. The winch is used for collecting fuel, weapons and stranded informants, so in the long run it's just as essential as a cluster of hellfires tucked under the wing.

You have a plentiful supply of hydras, but they are nowhere near as powerful as the hellfires, although they are released in rapid salvos. It would have been

AND THE NOMINEES FOR BEST ACTOR ARE...

The criminal pairing of the year look on as one of Ortega's nukes is tested at sea.

There we have it, Kilbaba pulls the cheesiest grin ever as a plan takes shape in his evil mind.



The scene switches to our intrepid pilot, as he is forced out of bed to hear the bad news.

At a private conference in the White House, the cool Comanche pilot is told to kick ass, or else.

Jungle Strike

Keith Pullin rides his chopper into town.

CD REVIEW HD REVIEW

good to see a few more modern weapons in this version and it's also irritating having to press the space bar to switch between them. It can't be that hard to configure one of the other joystick buttons to do this for you.

The complete guide to terrorism

Pressing F1 on the keyboard brings up a detailed tactical display of the surrounding area, showing all relevant targets with a brief explanation telling you why they're there and how big the explosion has to be to destroy them. This concise terrorist encyclopaedia also tells you the location of ammo dumps, mobile units and even where fuel can be found. If you want to progress in this game, you'll be accessing this almost as much as blasting fascists.

The *Eldorado*-type FMV intro is so full of cheesy grins it makes you wonder if it was filmed on location at Gremlin itself...

It's important to get the hang of flying the Comanche as quickly as you can. At first you'll be plummeting to the ground in flames as often as you are blasting the enemy. To succeed, you must shoot as you move. Staying in one place and releasing a dozen hellfires at a tank or one of the many other ground attack vehicles is futile, you just end up as a sitting duck.

The way to win is to come in fast, loose off a few missiles and then spin round behind the target and release a few more while its guns are still pointing the other way. If you can master this you're halfway to completing the game.

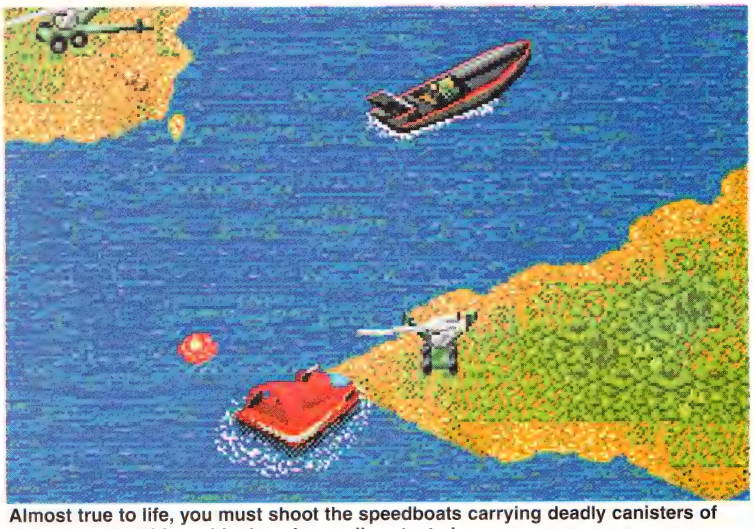
There are eight campaigns, all of them containing more submissions than *Desert Strike* ever did. If you want danger, then flying straight into the headquarters of the most heavily armed drug lord in the world should set your pulse racing. If that doesn't appeal to your adrenaline glands, then how about weaving your way through the mountains in order to destroy a couple of Tomahawk cruise missiles.

Stealth is the way

Jungle Strike is alive with action. You can even strap yourself into an F-117A Stealth fighter, which makes a pleasant yet initially confusing change from the highly manoeuvrable Comanche. The rides don't stop there either. *Jungle Strike* is more like a day out at Alton Towers, with a special assault cycle and hovercraft included in the array of vehicles you can experience.

The main problem with *Jungle Strike* is forcing your way through the early part of the game. The control method can seem frustrating and the missions too hard, but hidden in the apparently flawed system is a flying technique that you will soon learn to love.

Some people might expect this to be a mindless blast, but *Jungle Strike* offers a bit more than production line terrorist assassination. It's good to see a sequel that's improved upon the original. For a long lasting campaign experience, *Jungle Strike* is the one.

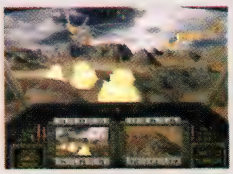


Almost true to life, you must shoot the speedboats carrying deadly canisters of plutonium, but this archipelago is a well protected area – as you can see.

ALTERNATIVES

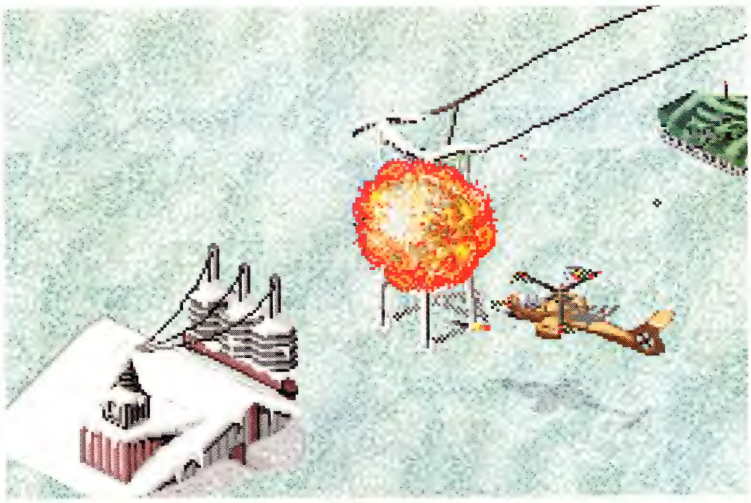
METAL MARINES
Mindscape ● £29.99 ● 81%
3-D isometric battles that have their good and bad points.

DESERT STRIKE
EA ● £34.99 ● 85%
The prequel that is more of the same, except in (yes!) a desert.



COMANCHE
Novalogic ● £39.99 ● 90%
Rock hard, exhilarating chopper antics – truly superb!

Finally you step into the majestic monster of a chopper that will see you save your beloved USA.



Don't give the enemy any advantage, so destroy everything in sight. Watch out for tanks though, the best way to deal with these is by attacking from the rear.

JUNGLE STRIKE

Publisher
Gremlin
Tel: (01742) 753423
CD £34.99/HD £34.99

Minimum System
386-33SX (486 recommended), 4Mb of RAM, 256 colour VGA card, CD-ROM drive. Joystick recommended, supports all major sound cards

For
Eight campaigns, with sub missions
Solid presentation
Becomes highly addictive
Different vehicles

Against
Crap acting in FMV intro
Hard to get into
Keep bumping into things

87%

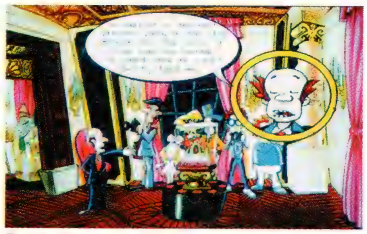
The Big Red Adventure

Steve Hill ventures behind the Iron Curtain to explore capitalist Russia. That's right, things have certainly changed in the Soviet state.

Set in a hypothetical USSR, where communism is but a distant memory, *The Big Red Adventure* is a wacky animated point 'n' click affair. The convoluted storyline revolves around the exploits of three foreign visitors who foil the plans of some of the old guard who wish to return Mother Russia to communist rule.

During the adventure, you assume the role of each of the trio in turn and utilise their various characteristics to your benefit. Towards the end, the three storylines converge and the characters all meet up to reveal the strange secret at the heart of the game, apparently.

The humour, such as it is, lies in the incongruous consumerist imagery and glib wordplay. As the intro explains, decadent youths now spend their time playing on Lenintendo machines, watching KGB TV, or even attending the concerts of The Rolling Soviets. The intro, which is a mickey-take of *Battleship Potemkin's* Odessa steps sequence, is actually quite watchable, with a full voice-over in a ham-Russian accent giving you the gist of the plot.



Doug eyes up the crown of Ivan the Horrible, as you do.

Better put some clothes on, Donna – you don't want the bitter wind of a Moscow winter shrivelling your Brezhnevs.

Reddy and waiting

You begin the game as Doug Nut, a kind of Mr Logic character albeit with a devious criminal mind. During the adventure, Doug uses his technical know-how to further his criminal capers. He starts off on a guided tour of The Kremlin, which is now a museum, numbering among its exhibits the typewriter of Leo Tallstory; author of *War and Pacemaker* (ho, ho) and the piano of Strabinsky.

More significantly, the museum also contains the priceless crown of Tsar Ivan the Horrible, which Douggy decides he must steal. To this end, he reels off a few photographs and returns to his hotel room to examine them. This is where you take over, equipped with the usual open/close, pick up, examine, and talk to functions.

A quick scan of the room reveals an array of goods including a suitcase, a computer and a TV. After unsuccessfully attempting to get in to bed with the remote control to watch Russian quiz shows, I picked up everything I could and reluctantly headed for the outside world.

> **"A black pedlar with outsized lips is just one example of some fairly crass racial stereotyping contained in *The Big Red Adventure*..."**

A quick examination of the hotel foyer revealed a 'strange plant imported from Cuba', but unfortunately the game has no icon for 'roll up and smoke'. The hotel also has its own electronic chess game which proceeded to hammer me in seven moves.

Most people manage with just *mirrors* on the ceiling...

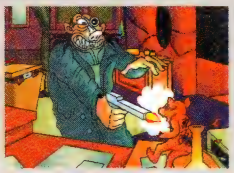
After handing his key to the porter, Doug ventures outside where he is confronted by a newsagent who includes 'PlayBoris' amongst his stock, as well as 'The New Pravda'. This is worth buying as it contains a competition to win tickets to a TV show which is offering a hot air balloon as a prize. This balloon can then be used to fly on to the museum roof and steal the crown. Logical, captain.

And so it continues, with Doug wandering around Moscow trying to find the answers to three obscure questions. The action sequences certainly aren't going to worry *Simon the Sorcerer* but some of the locations are quite impressive, notably McRomanov's Burger Czar (clever wording, cheers) which comes complete with roller-skating waitresses and the *Happy Days* theme tune. It is worth dropping in to buy a VodkaCola and a Great Bear burger, as these help you to answer the

ALTERNATIVES

SAM & MAX
US Gold ● £39.99 ● 83%
Fantastically funny LucasArts adventure. With a rabbit. Top.

SIMON THE SORCERER
Adventure Soft ● £44.99 ● 94%
Bald Brummie's benchmark fantasy. With the voice of Rimmer.



WOODRUFF
Sierra ● £39.99 ● 87%
It's got a stupidly long title, and is a quirky Pythonesque affair.

competition questions and make some progress.

Red Square is included, as is Gorky Park where a black pedlar with outsized lips attempts to sell you a dodgy Rublex. This is just one example of some fairly crass racial stereotyping contained in *The Big Red Adventure* which also portrays Japanese people as complete morons who are unable to pronounce the letters 'l' and 'r'.

A load of Bolsheviks

The second character in the game is Dino Fagoli, a brain-dead ex-boxer of Italian descent. He recounts how he left his ship to buy a lollipop but was so stupid that he got lost. When he finally returned to the port, the ship had weighed anchor and left him high and dry with only ten rublodollars to his name. Using his miniscule brain power, Dino decides to head for the next port in the hope of intercepting his ship. Unfortunately, he has forgotten the name of the port – doh!

Dino staggers in to an inn to drown his sorrows, but all is not lost. He meets a local fisherman with in-depth knowledge of the area. Typically there is a snag; the fisherman is heavily traumatised by the disappearance of his pet parrot and is rendered virtually mute. Dino vows to return the feathered beast to its owner in return for the vital information.

"A quick examination of the foyer revealed 'a strange plant imported from Cuba', but unfortunately the game has no icon for 'roll up and smoke'..."

After some high-jinks with a circus and a mysterious gypsy called Zelda (*Terrahawks,* anyone?), he retrieves the rogue bird and sets off for the port on the Orient Express, but not before he has encountered rabid wolves and bloodthirsty bandits.

Czar Wars

The trio is completed by Donna Fatale who could be described, for want of a better word, as a harlot. She is also probably the sauciest cartoon babe since the Cadbury's Caramel rabbit. During her sordid past she has been, amongst other things, a striptease artist and is constantly at the mercy of ruthless blackmailers. Donna is plying her current trade as a ballet dancer when an American millionaire comes into her dressing room, professes his undying love, and invites her for a tour aboard the Orient Express.

This is where the three central characters meet up as the adventure approaches its climax. It should take you countless hours of gameplay to get this far though as you wander around aimlessly, being constantly rebuffed by anyone you attempt to speak to, and generally getting frustrated. If this is your bag, you should find great pleasure in working out the various clues and piecing the game together.

The stylised 256-colour SVGA graphics are nice to look at, the inventory is straightforward to use and there are over 100 locations. The method of walking around could be easier though, and the time taken for each location to appear (*Hobbit*-style) can be irritating. It is also a complete chore to install the shiny red disk version, as it comes on a whacking great 12 floppies; taking up 60Mbs of hard disk! CD installation is a great deal easier. If you're after a long-lasting adventure and don't mind corny humour, then I suggest you slip on your thermals and go East.

Dino adopts the same expression as Steve when he's trying to think of another tenuous Alan Partridge quote to work into his reviews.

Donna hunts for more gullible men in the dining car of the Orient Express. Isn't that Bill Gates on the right?

Doug runs into a snap-happy Japanese tourist in Red Square.

3-D ASSES

Doug Nuts: international master criminal. Bet it just says 'geek' on his passport, though.

Dino Fagoli: sailor. No relation to ex-PC POWER staffer Dino Boni, except in hairstyle.

Donna Fatale: erm, 'model/actress/whatever'. Looking for romance... and roubles.

THE BIG RED ADVENTURE

Publisher
Core Design
Tel: (01332) 297797
£39.99

Minimum System
386, 2Mb of RAM, SVGA, 60Mb of hard disk space (uncompressed) or 7Mb (compressed), 90 minutes of time to install (unless you have the CD, like we did)

For
Long lasting
Visually striking

Against
Slow moving
More corn than Kelloggs

79%

Battledrome

Smashing into the office, Keith Pullin rotates his turret and launches a volley of missiles in the direction of *Battledrome*.

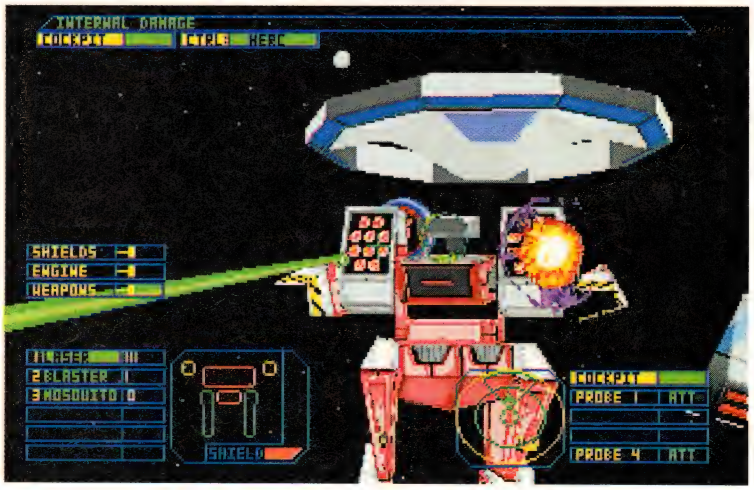
HD REVIEW

Clanking robot combat seems to be all the rage at the moment, what with *EarthSiege* and *Iron Assault* pounding down the door. Now *Battledrome* thuds into the fray with a first person perspective, one-on-one, arena based combat game.

You start off with a few credits in your piggy bank and a fairly run-o'-the-mill light killing machine as your vehicle of destruction. The idea is to work your way up ten tiers of the robot league, winning enough money to finance your drive for the coveted number one position.

In the league there are about fifty other competitors all vying for the top spot. As you log in to the battle network to see who is ready to fight, you can scan through each warrior and take a look at their statistics to find out their win/lose ratio and to discover what metal monster they pilot. There are three different classes of robots; light, medium and heavy, totalling ten robots in all.

So much to sort out and so many warriors to choose from, what a life!



Log on

Sometimes you will be challenged by an eager pilot as soon as you log on, other times you will have to cherry pick them. Either way you must first negotiate the terms of engagement and talk dosh of course.

Certain battle factors can be changed; the size of the arena, the number of obstacles and more importantly what weapons can and cannot be used. Effectively you can say to a potential opponent, "Okay, I'll fight you but you're not allowed to use lasers". It's amazing what you can get away with, if you try it on.

Obviously the main reason you're fighting in the first place is to win a bit of money, so the idea is to make yourself look attractive to challengers by offering ridiculous terms and then blasting them ragged. You can even change the victory terms; early on it might be wise to make the loser the first 'droid to reach fifty percent damage, however the higher the stakes the more money you win.

As far as presentation goes, *Battledrome* is hard to fault, the computer synthesised voices are crystal clear and the whole process of logging in and out of the battle NET couldn't be simpler, but as everyone knows, when it comes to the crunch it's the gameplay that is all important and this is where *Battledrome* falls short.

Each robot is technically known as a Herc. This one is coming under some heavy fire from another light Herc such as yours, as well as some neutral turrets.

Metal fatigue

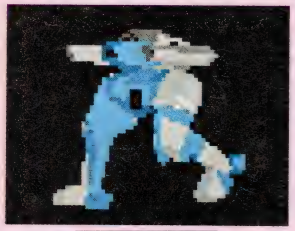
When you're finally dropped into the arena, initial reactions are to blast the referee who swoops by in his flying saucer but a quick fine soon puts a stop to that. You lumber forward only to find that turning your head doesn't necessarily mean you're turning the whole robot around. As you run around like a headless chicken, trying to figure out which direction you're going in, another fine is slapped onto your bill as you inadvertently stagger backwards out of the ring.

The ref's not all bad though, he will kindly teleport you back into the arena – straight into the path of your opponent, how generous! Still it beats trudging

RISE OF THE ROBOTS

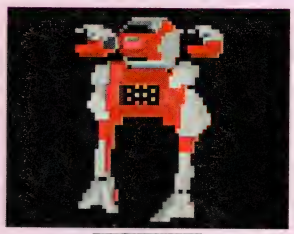
STRYDER
This nippy little Herc doesn't pack much of a punch, but is certainly hard to catch.

BARRETA
Quick, like the Stryder, this high speed craft can carry more shields, making it a tougher target.



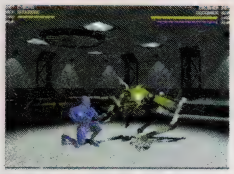
AVENGER
The biggest of the light Hercs, but this beast only goes half the speed of the Stryder, a bad buy to avoid.

COBRA
This awkward looking machine has a good arsenal and has enough speed to lead you out of danger.



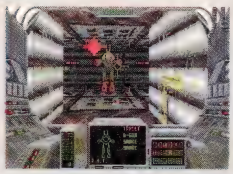
NOMAD
The first of the meaty Hercs! A missile launcher ensures nobody underestimates this monster.

ALTERNATIVES



RISE OF THE ROBOTS
Mirage ● £49.99 ● 32%
Really conked-out robot beat-'em-up. A shocking spasm of a game.

EARTHSIEGE
Sierra ● £39.99 ● 72%
Good graphics, average fun. One of the better robot blasters.



IRON ASSAULT
Virgin ● £34.99 ● 68%
The robotic version of *Doom*. Becomes a bit repetitive.

around a dimly lit stadium looking for them and believe me a lot of pointless time is spent doing just that. So, make the most of it, press fire and watch, as your upright juggernaut opens up with every weapon it has.

There's no subtlety here, just non-stop bombardment. Most battles are played in exactly the same way; a simple cat and mouse routine culminating in two massive robots standing six inches apart, face to face, unloading an obscene amount of firepower into each other.

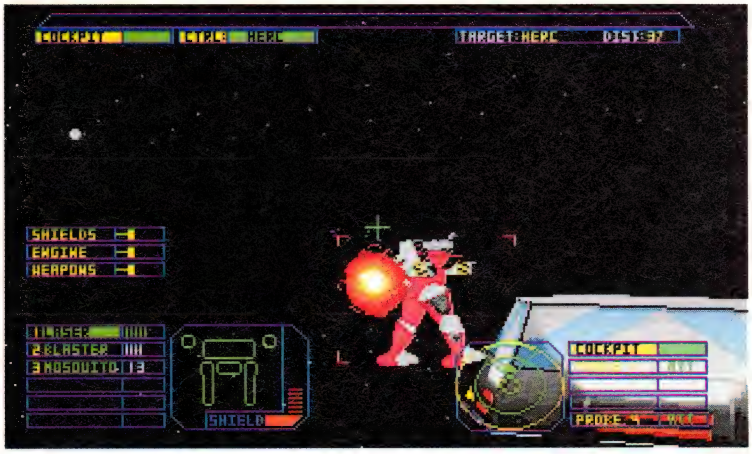
A fine map

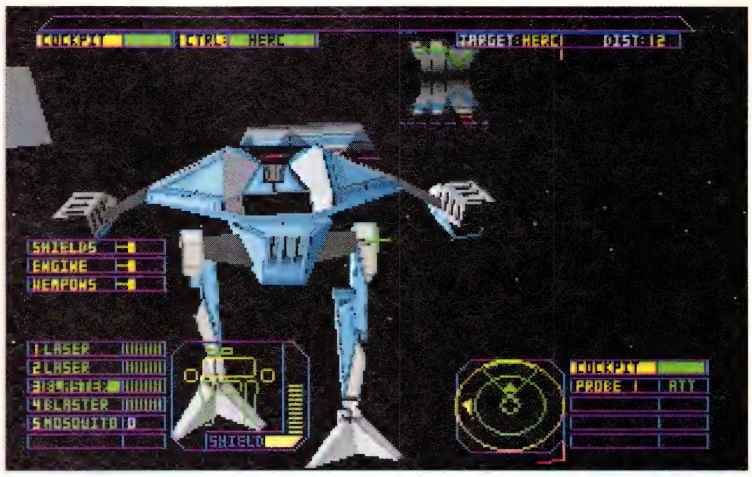
A close up view reveals these monsters consist of some fine texture mapped polygons, they're well animated and move their huge bulks around extremely smoothly. The only problem is that while being dazzled graphically by the robots, you are at the same time suffering severely from the appalling ground and

ceiling of the arena, which is depicted as a series of dots on a dark background.

You would have thought this type of slapdash programming was long gone, it's the kind of landscape that would be barely acceptable on the Spectrum. Unfortunately it's still here and your battles take place in the blackest, dullest, grimmest location you're ever likely to see.

Why confine the game to an arena anyway? Why not make it a real fox and hound type affair with you tracking down your nemesis as he lurks somewhere deep within a city full of skyscrapers and tunnels?





As you can see the quality texture mapping is the highlight of a very bland looking screen; this is the brightest colour setting, too! Still, this droid is spectacular.

Thinking about it, I wouldn't be surprised to see Sierra release a sequel in about a years time that lets you do just that.

You would have thought this kind of slapdash programming was long gone; it's the kind of thing that was barely acceptable on the Spectrum...

At least there's a network link up which allows you to challenge a bunch of modem users such as yourself, who are willing to waste away a few minutes of their lives. You can link up directly to another PC too, so there is a little bit of longevity tucked in there somewhere.

Long range nostalgia

I remember a multi-player game that was released on the Amiga 500 a few years ago called *Battlemech*. This was an overhead strategy affair rather than arcade and it suffered from incredibly basic graphics, but surprisingly it conveyed a much better feeling of warfare than this ever could.

There were short and long range missiles, rockets, machine guns; everything. Tactics were in abundance and it was a joy to play; why does *Battledrome* have to be another case of blinding presentation and graphics (up to a point), with the most important ingredient missing?

Seeing such a tried and tested formula wasted, upsets me as much as this review will probably upset Sierra.

Battledrome's only real favourable asset is the price, but overall it is one game you should really avoid.

BATTLEDROME

Publisher
Sierra
Tel: (01734) 303322
£19.99

Minimum System
386/33DX (486/33 highly recommended), MS-DOS 5.0 or above, 4Mb RAM (8Mb recommended), 256 VGA graphics card. A mouse is essential and all major sound cards are supported

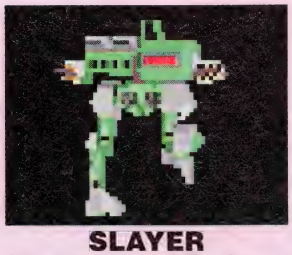
For
Stunning texture mapped robots
Great presentation
Cheap

Against
No longevity
Basic gameplay

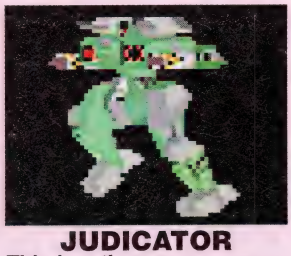
52%

TALON
A wicked robot that has plenty of carrying space while still managing to cruise at a fair speed.

RONIN
Similar to the Talon but it's massive cargo space means this mother really chugs into battle.



SLAYER
The cheapest of the heavy robots. A good buy for the psychotic first-time buyer. There's no mercy with this.



JUDICATOR
This has the same weaponry as the Hammer, however it cannot carry as much ammo. Nasty though!

HAMMER
This is the one every pilot hopes to get their hands on. If you want destructive force, you can't beat this!

SuperK

Steve Hill puts on a pair of fawn leather driving gloves (with airtex backs and popper fasteners) and straps himself into his SuperKart. This is a man in control of his vehicle.

PC POWER PLATINUM AWARD

CD REVIEW

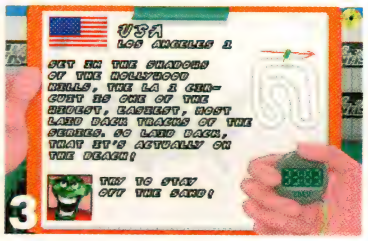
SuperKarts is clearly looking to corner the *Super Mario Kart* market and does bear a freak resemblance to the console classic. But you couldn't ask for a better blueprint, and *SuperKarts* certainly oozes quality (to use the old cliché). Using a Thrustmaster T1 steering wheel, it is possible to recreate that arcade feeling without the distraction of bum-fluffed glue sniffers trying to scrounge cigarettes and spare change.

SuperKarts comes with a full array of options and features. There are eight drivers of different nationalities to choose from, including a spunky lady. The action takes place over 16 tracks in eight international locations, each with its own distinctive scenery and atmosphere. Race length is hugely variable, from a two-lap sprint to a 40-lap marathon, and difficulty ranges from easy to pro.

You can elect to play a full season, or just the first or just the second half, with an option to save the game between races. Points are awarded in roughly Grand Prix fashion, but with an extra one for to the driver with the fastest lap time.

Prize money is also doled out accordingly, which can then be used to go shopping before the next race. Your kart's performance can be improved by spending money on the engine, tyres, strength, and the fuel tank size. You can also buy turbos, supagrip and oil tokens, which can be utilised during races in time-honoured *Mario Kart* style.

Travel to Delhi for round four of the SuperKarts championship, in the shadow of the Taj Mahal. This Indian will burn your tyres.



1 *Baywatch* in a kart. The expansive LA beach provides the setting for the opening skirmish. **2** Select your driver from this motley collection of ugly mugs. **3** Each race is preceded by an overview of the track with advice on certain aspects of it. Current lap record is also shown. **4** Use your prize money to customise your kart between races. **5** The majestic Ayers rock in Australia, and not a crass soap opera to be seen.

arts

If you're desperate to clinch the title, you can even buy five championship points for a cool grand.

There is also an arcade mode which requires you to finish among the first three in order to qualify for the next race. Should you fail to qualify, you lose a life and must resume your place on the grid for a repeat of the race.

I suggest you get your motor running, get the wheels in line and go, go go!

Extra lives can be bought with your winnings along with the usual selection of treats. The shopping between races ensures that success breeds success as the more money you win, the more improvements you can make to your kart, and so on. Conversely, if you get stuck in a rut with no prize money coming in, it is harder to pull things round and you end up driving the karting equivalent of a dilapidated Reliant Robin!

The first race takes place in Los Angeles, California on a wide open beach track. This is swiftly followed by a tour of the grey docklands of London and then a spin around a Berlin industrial estate. Next up is Delhi, where the track is lined with all manner of ornate Indian decor and other tracks include Australia, Brazil, Japan and Moscow, where you can actually see the tips of nuclear warheads on some corners!

Karter USM

But never mind the periphery, it's the gameplay that counts and fortunately *SuperKarts* is one of the most exciting and playable driving games ever to grace the PC. The well designed circuits and in-game features make for some thrilling skirmishes. A quick burst of turbo sends your kart screeching round the track at speeds not witnessed since a recent PC POWER outing to Birmingham with a certain Mr Butt at the wheel.

Supagrip is fairly self-explanatory and allows you to throw your kart round the tightest of bends at a blistering pace. Victory must be secured by any means necessary, and if this involves dropping an oil slick in front of your pursuers then so be it. The aforementioned icons can be picked up during each race, along with extra money. There are also jumps, sneaky short cuts and hidden areas to give the game long lasting appeal.

This is certainly not a non-contact sport, with shunting, barging and carving up commonplace. Should you inadvertently come face-to-face with a brick wall, you can simply reverse back onto the track and rejoin the skirmish.

Also, if your kart picks up too much damage, you can drop into the pits for some swift repairs and a refuel, which is useful in longer races. On the harder levels, the racing is really intense, with split-second braking and strategic use of the various functions required just to stay with the pack. There is also a two player option for those really vicious duels.

SuperKarts reeks of class and contains some nifty graphics such as flames shooting from your tyres during turbo mode. The music is excellent and the superb sound effects add to the frantic action. It is instantly playable and immensely addictive so I suggest you get your motor running, get the wheels in line and go, go, go!

ALTERNATIVES

SKUNNY KART
Shareware ● NR
Previous PC POWER cover disk favourite with the word kart in its name.

NASCAR RACING
Virgin ● £34.99 ● 85%
Fast, exciting, North American stock car action in an oval bowl.

F1 GRAND PRIX
Microprose ● £16.99 ● 92%
Vintage Formula One simulator that has stood the test of time.

SUFFER A JET MOVEMENT

As with all racing games on the PC, the best bit of kit you need if you really want the full wind-in-your-hair experience is the Thrustmaster steering wheel and pedals. This all in one controller retails for £179.99 so they're not cheap, but we at PC POWER heartily recommend them if you are *really* serious about your driving games. *SuperKarts* for example is vastly improved with this device and the majority of this review was conducted using it as the sole control method. If you have some spare dosh hanging about, don't buy your granny that new crocheted bobble hat, get a Thrustmaster instead. Contact Paper Logic on (0171) 636 7099.

SUPERKARTS

Publisher
Virgin
Tel: (0181) 9602255
£44.99

Minimum System
386 (486-33 recommended), 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive, VGA. Supports all major soundcards, joystick, Thrustmaster T1 steering wheel.

For
I like it
It's good
Instant playability
Very hard top level

Against
Needs a Thrustmaster for full effect
Poor collision detection

90%

CyClones

Yet another inferior *Doom* clone straight off the production line, or 'a multi-media experience that'll blow you away'? The Hillmeister investigates *CyClones* from Mindscape.

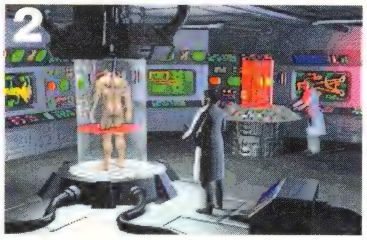
HD REVIEW

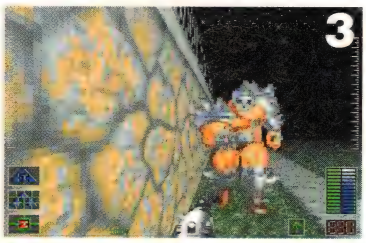
Robots, robots, robots, that's all I ever hear. These particular robots are, in fact, pseudo-human, having been cloned from human tissue samples, genetically engineered and cybernetically enhanced by evil alien invaders. But who cares? All I need to know is what are the keys and who do I shoot? This tenuous scenario for a game gives you a 3-D killer's-eye view of the proceedings and an array of weapons to choose from. Sound familiar? The basic plot is search and destroy, rescue a hostage and take over a spaceship. Simple and bloody. I like it, it's good.

Before you actually get into the game there is an anti-piracy measure to contend with which involves typing in a randomly-selected word from the accompanying rule book. This shouldn't present too much of a problem to anyone who used to shoplift Spectrum cassette inlays from WH Smiths (Er, is that an admission, Steve? – Ed).

You could loosely describe *CyClones* as a point 'n' click blood-fest – if you have nothing better to do than sit around paraphrasing run-of-the-mill computer games...

The rule book itself is a fairly grim tome and should really only be used for reference, unless you have an inordinate amount of spare time, lack of friends etc. For an instant intro, *CyClones* contains a tutorial option which demonstrates the basic game functions. This is ideal for hard-working journalists with pressing engagements to keep, such as three hour pub lunches.





1 *Robocop* meets *Doom* in future-shock gore-fest. 2 Strip-searches never used to be this complex. What was wrong with rubber gloves? 3 Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough. 4 One false move and the coke machine gets it!

Send in the clones

CyClones begins in a poorly lit courtyard, and after a couple of seconds of fumbling you come under a full-scale assault from a pair of snipers. Shooting back proves fairly futile as you appear to be armed with little more than a glorified peashooter. Furthermore, the controls are ungainly to say the least, being a combination of mouse and keyboard, although there is a joystick option which I never really got the hang of.

Making good your escape from your potential assassins you come across a couple of strange-looking mutants who skip across the screen in a fairly camp fashion. Things liven up when you start pumping lead into them with a satisfying spray of blood spurting from their chests. It is also worth frisking their twitching corpses as they are carrying such useful treats as extra ammunition.

There is also a shed which, once you have blown away its occupants, you can fleece its contents including the all-important bio-kits and mech-kits

After a death-defying struggle against the alien invaders, you eventually rescue the captured scientist who casually thanks you and wanders off. Talk about gratitude!

which can be used to replenish your health and armour respectively. These are picked up by clicking the right mouse button when the cross-hairs (which conveniently change colour) are over the required object. The left mouse button is for firing whatever weapon you have at your diposal. You soon get the hang of conserving ammo, revitalising yourself, and generally blowing away anything in your path.

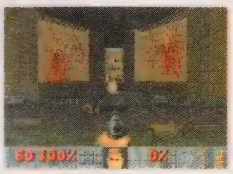
Once you have salvaged everything useful, you can leave the courtyard and enter into an underground maze which is full of more treats and, if you're lucky, better weapons. After a requisite amount of mincing about you find access keys which allow you to travel further into the complex until you find an elevator which takes you to another, more interesting level. This has some fairly tasty graphics including a Coke machine, albeit apparently empty. On this level you must rescue the captured scientist (who curiously doesn't even want to be rescued!) and make your escape.

On your adventures you come across a variety of enemies.

All I need to know is: what are the keys, and who do I shoot?

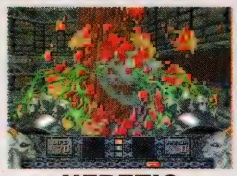
These include attack machines such as Flybots, Trackbots and Gun Balls, which fly around your head pumping bullets into you. Further irritation is provided by the alien monsters – namely the Pitbull, Ape and Wasp – all oversized mutants intent on destroying you. Nastier still are the CyClones themselves who come in four different shapes and are generally heavily armed and best avoided.

ALTERNATIVES



DOOM 2
Virgin ● £34.99 ● 95%
There is no better shoot-'em-up available at the moment.

SYSTEM SHOCK
EA ● £44.99 ● 94%
The thinking man's *Doom*. An absolute must for *Aliens* fans



HERETIC
id/Raven ● Shareware ● NR
It's *Doom*, except with magical bits. And chickens.

Home alone

There is a lot more to *CyClones* than there initially seems. Once you have mastered the controls, got past the visually drab first stage and started to find the access keys, it becomes quite playable. You could loosely describe it as a point 'n' click blood-fest in a futuristic scenario, that is, if you have nothing better to do than sit around paraphrasing run-of-the-mill computer games.

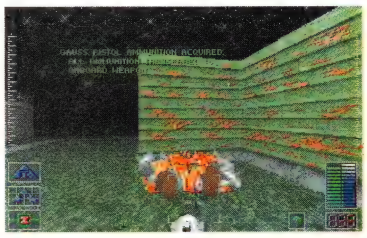
CyClones features quite a few nice touches such as the fact that the blood-spattered corpses of your victims remain where they fell, allowing you to discern where you have already been. There is a basic map function included but it is certainly not going to put Ordnance Survey out of business. Another pleasant feature comes into play when you have run out of ammunition and the sabre glove is automatically employed which enables you to crush the soft heads of your foes.

The game comes complete with the standard array of configurations. You can adjust the volume of the cheesy music and choose between three levels of difficulty, and you can also switch the flat detail on or off and adjust the size of the screen to suit your PC.

Anyone with enough time and patience to get to the later stages should find lasting value in *CyClones*. Give it a whirl.

Down Fido, good doggy. Okay, another step and you'll never bark again.

From left to right; a bio-kit, extra ammo and a mech-kit. Collect and keep.



CYCLONES

Publisher
Mindscape (SSI)
Tel:(01444) 246333
£44.99

Minimum System
486-33 MHz (486-50 MHz recommended), 4Mb of RAM, VGA card, DOS ver. 5.0, 20Mb of hard drive space, mouse essential. Supports all major sound cards

For
Suitably bloody graphics
Long lasting appeal

Against
Initially unspectacular
Unwieldy controls

82%

Hammer of the Gods

CD REVIEW

Keith Pullin gets horny as Valhalla beckons, all it takes is a hammer and a little DIY.

Forget B&Q or Texas Homecare, Hammer of the Gods was the prestigious title aspired to by any self-respecting Norseman, and was awarded to only the most heroic of Viking warriors. In this game you are a Viking hero who, along with completing a stack load of quests, must raid the icy tundra of the north to build up your reputation and territory.

Hammer is essentially an overhead strategy that seems to have been inspired by WW2 games such as *Campaign* and *Panzer General*. You attempt to take over as many towns, cities and villages as possible; the more land you own, the more you reap the benefit of taxes. You can also accrue more money by forging peace treaties and trading information, magic and even daughters!

Of course, you don't have to take over all the settlements; enemy holdings can simply be razed to the ground, population included. My current record stands at 46 innocent townsfolk!

The main problem with *Hammer of the Gods* is the bland side-view battle system. Your soldiers (you can have no more than eight in any one battle) including bowmen, berserks, wizards and Viking Heroes (there are 27 in all) line up on one side of the screen, while the enemy huddle together opposite. The two small armies then close in on each other, one square at a time.

The Viking Santa Claus asks this young lady what she would like for Xmas.

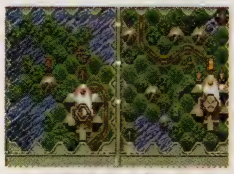
The whole approach is leaning towards the SSI fight scenes found in old Advanced Dungeons & Dragons games such as *Pools of Radiance* or *Death Knights of Krynn*. On your travels you come across helpful Gods such as Loki and Nanna (Goddess of Purity). They give you spells and useful items like magical shields and the '+2 Dragon Slayer' sword which can vastly improve a soldier's melee rating.

You can accrue more money by trading magic, information, and even daughters!

The battles leave a lot to be desired. Ideally, you would be able to command a massive Viking army of thousands, using proper war tactics. Instead we have small blocky graphics within a rigid system that hardly brings forth the blood-curdling tension of war.

There are four difficulty settings and a host of other tweaks like the customise option which allows you to toggle between sea monsters and storms at sea, amongst other things. Somebody who's after a very simple and easy to use strategy might go for this, but it will offer little for accomplished strategists. Unless you're into Norse legend, steer clear of this hammer.

ALTERNATIVES



BATTLE ISLE 2
Blue Byte ● £39.99 ● 89%
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HEIMDALL 2
Core ● £39.99 ● 82%
More of a Viking adventure than strategy, but still gets you thinking.

PANZER GENERAL CD
Mindscape ● £44.99 ● 83%
A great all-round fighting and thinking game, with you as a squarehead.

HAMMER OF THE GODS

Publisher
US Gold
Tel: (0121) 625 3366
£39.99

Minimum System
386-25 DX or greater, 4Mb RAM, 256 colour VGA/SVGA, CD-ROM drive. Mouse essential, supports all major sound cards

For
A lot of characters
Large detailed map

Against
Fighting scenes are very weak
Trading is fiddly
Drab graphics, should be bloodier

70%

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Nick Faldo's Championship Golf: Deluxe Edition

Keith Pullin puts on his Pringle sweater, grabs his clubs and ventures into the rough for a round with Nick Faldo.

CD REVIEW

Golf games have always been dodgy territory. Done properly, they are universally accepted – there's nothing quite like playing against a few mates in the warmth of your front room after a few bevvies down at the nineteenth.

But what if they're done badly? Unfortunately, *Nick Faldo's Championship Golf* is a prime example of what can go wrong, and sadly it's this journalist's job to tell you all about it.

Starting at the beginning, even the introduction is awful. I'm sorry but it is. It lasts all of 30 seconds and features a rendered fairway with a golf ball being hit straight down the middle, rolling down towards the flag, finally ending up as a hole in one.

I'm sure more imagination could have been put into it, and with a star like Nick Faldo fronting it, you would expect better. But then isn't that always the case with big name licences?

Nick Faldon't

A simple front end menu system eases you onto the course, with basic options such as match play, stroke play and a choice of two courses. One interesting feature is the way you can choose between spring, summer and winter to play your round (what is wrong with autumn, I'll never know).

When you've decided what time of the year you wish to have your round of golf in, you are confronted with a club selection screen. Up to this point, it all seems fine, there's even a bar graph that tells you how good you are at using certain clubs. It's venturing beyond this point that really brings the full effect of the game banging home.

A brief introduction to each hole sees our expert Nick advising on how it's best to stay out of the water (really, I would never have figured that out) and hit your shot down the left-hand side of the fairway. Yeah, right, pinpointing the ball with that kind of accuracy using a control method such as this is like landing the NASA space shuttle wearing a pair of boxing gloves smothered in treacle. Give me a break!

Standing on the tee, eagerly waiting to smash your ball towards that luscious green on the horizon, it's time to find out exactly what this simulation can

The best advice our so called expert can give in the coaching mode is to hit the ball on to the green, nothing about stance or spin. Does he really know his stuff?

Does any one remember that time when Nick Faldo put a six foot putt wide of the hole. Here's another one, it's not for the Open Championship, but I bet he misses!

(or can't) do. So where are the camera views? Oh, there aren't any. Fine. How hard is the wind blowing? It doesn't say, never mind – I'll just hit the little blighter as hard as I can.

Unfairway

The whole experience is mouse controlled, so moving the pointer over your jerk, sorry, jerkily animated golfer and pressing the left button will bring up the power bar. This short, stumpy thing will then draw a line which heads towards a 100% marker on the left-hand side. Clicking the button again as it hits full power (or whatever strength you require), will send it plunging back to the right, whereupon you must click again when it reaches the initial starting point. Deft mouse control is needed to avoid the line going to the extremes and either hooking or slicing the shot

With other golf games, this kind of system poses no kind of problem at all – in fact it's obviously the best method to employ. The trouble with *Nick Faldo's Golf* is that the bar is so tiny that you can click it once and it's perfect and then the next time it's a millimetre out and it could be a difference of about 50 to 100 yards, an unbearably annoying aspect.

The control method is like landing the Space Shuttle wearing a pair of boxing gloves smothered in treacle...

Once you've watched your blocky ball sail over some relatively impressive Gouraud shaded scenery, it's time to figure out where you are in relation to the flag. You can move the mouse pointer over to the right hand side of the screen, which brings up a map showing the hole you are on, but it would have been better to have some kind of small indicator on-screen which gives you an at-a-glance idea of where you must aim.

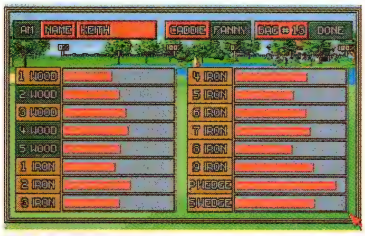
There's also a problem with the perspective. The ball often sails up into the air and drops down in front of a hill, and as the screen draws the next view (which, all ranting aside, is drawn extremely quickly and barely noticeable on a 486 upwards), you will often find you've landed behind the grassy knoll. Maybe it's a case of bad masking routines, or just another conspiracy theory.

So what would you expect the main improvement of the CD-ROM version to be? Sound, maybe? Well, it's a logical choice and a fair one... but wrong! I expected exciting Peter Allison commentary that constantly informed me of my hooks, slices or peach shots down the fairway. All I was treated to was an irritating caddie whose only qualification is stating the bleedin' obvious!

Sarcastic murmurs of "you won't be able to reach the green from there" or "you're in the bunker" are uttered far too often from your overrated caddie. You can even choose to take Fanny (Nick Faldo's constant course companion) if you want to, although it's probably best to preserve your nerves and go for one of the other three. The remainder of the sound, which consists of radio jingles and pathetic beeps, would make a Commodore 64 proud.

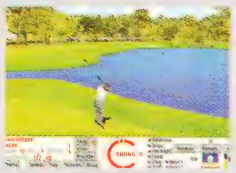
I hate to say it, but with the lack of depth and slack programming, this is one golf game that should never be considered. Spend your money on something that will give you lasting enjoyment, like *Links*. Sorry Grandslam, but this isn't up to CD-ROM standards.

Poor Nick looks as though he's straining, as he gives you a few words of advice before you tee off on the first hole. The best advice is stay in the bar.



The graphs inform you which of the clubs is your forté.

ALTERNATIVES



LINKS
US Gold ● £45.99 ● 86%
Old, but still one of the best golf games.

RYDER CUP GOLF
Hit Squad ● £12.99 ● 79%
Quality golfing at a budget price.

PGA TOUR GOLF
EA ● £34.99 ● 89%
Stunning graphics and great gameplay.

NICK FALDO'S GOLF

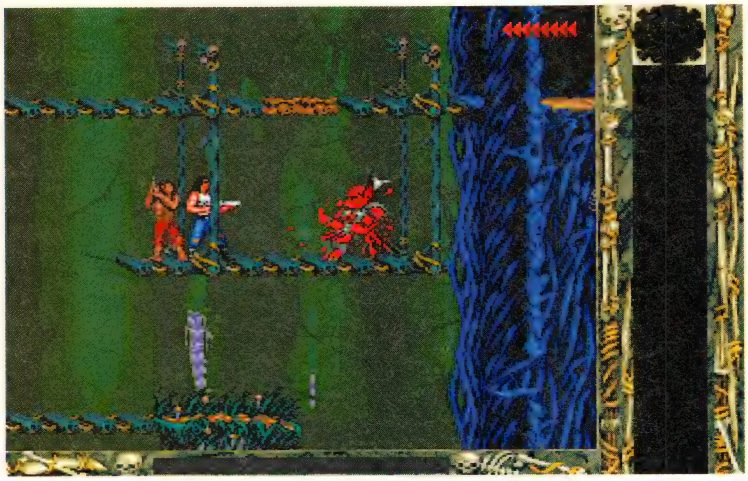
Publisher
Grandslam
Tel: (0181) 680 7044
£39.99

Minimum System
386-33 SX or higher, 2Meg of RAM, MS-DOS version 5, CD-ROM Drive, 256 colour VGA graphic card. Supports mouse and all major sound cards

For
Two courses

Against
Bad control system
Awful sound
Lack of options
Nick's name is dragged through the bunker!

45%



This is what happens when you mess with Blackhawke! Note the Androthi warrior who steps in and out of the shadows at surprisingly intelligent moments.

ALTERNATIVES

FLASHBACK
US Gold ● £37.99 ● NR
There's a bit of everything in this all-out classic Sci-Fi adventure.

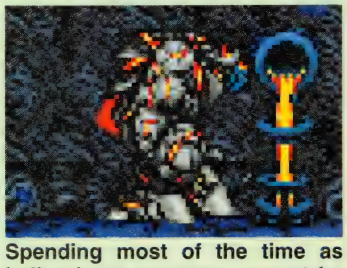
PRINCE OF PERSIA
Hit Squad ● £12.99 ● NR
More puzzle than action, but still a brilliant game that is superb value.

ANOTHER WORLD
Kixx ● £14.99 ● 85%
Tense adventure, the forerunner to *Flashback* now on budget.

BAD TO THE BONE

These Graggs appear in different colours, but they all pull out a shotgun, so use the shadows.

Nasty plants that mess you up really bad. Never land on one, but shoot it from the side.



Spending most of the time as balls, these creatures cannot be harmed until they stand upright.

The Androthi traitors lurk everywhere; they are badly armed and hated by the loyal Androthi.

There are no pleasant discussions about the weather on Tuul; the sky is always dark with smoke and the planet has been embroiled in war for as long as anyone can remember.

Most of the Androthi people are enslaved and working underground in mines for the evil tyrant Sarlac and his bunch of goblin-like henchmen, the Graggs. Some of the captives try and fight back but their lack of numbers and a real leader makes an organised comeback futile. Tuul seems truly doomed...

Until (fanfares, drum roll and copious amounts of canned cheering) Blackhawke the warrior suddenly appears deep within the mines 25 years after going missing. With a whopping great shotgun slung over his shoulder and impossible biceps that would keep ITV's Gladiators guessing, he starts freeing captives as he strolls forward with the ultimate goal of defeating Sarlac.

Blackhawke is a basic side scrolling platform/adventure, and from the screenshots you'll immediately notice similarities to *Flashback*. You would have thought if somebody wanted to copy a style, they would at least improve on it. Not here though. It is two years since *Flashback* was first released and *Blackhawke* hasn't furthered the genre at all.

The animation cannot be faulted – all the tiny sprites run, jump, pull their guns and die with the flowing grace of a psychotic ballet dancer. You can't forgive the backgrounds, however, as they're as dull as the storyline, with level after level of featureless stone walls. At least the atmosphere is enhanced with a slightly out of place, but nevertheless quality, spaghetti western soundtrack.

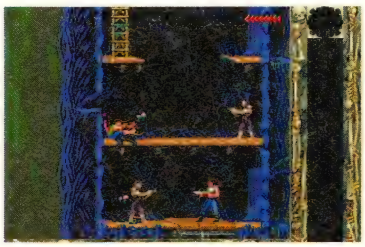
Hawke, line & sinker

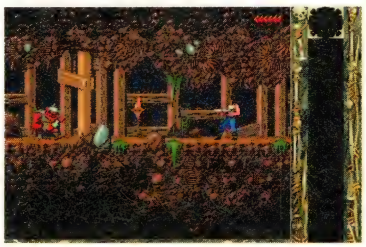
The really attractive aspect of *Blackhawke* is the way you can walk down a tunnel, shotgun in hand, and blow away anything that moves. Even the poor captured Androthi, chained to the wall, make ideal shields. You wouldn't believe how sadistically satisfying it feels to cower behind a half-starved prisoner as a sneering Gragg pumps him full of bullets.

Blasting the many horrors that lurk below the ground will nearly always result in a huge gut-ripping explosion of blood and entrails. If there's one thing you can say about *Blackhawke*, it doesn't hold back when it comes to portraying a bit of gooey realism, and that has to be admired.

Blackhawke is engrossing and you can't deny the gore's very enjoyable, but you get the feeling too much of the gameplay relies on the violence factor rather than the devious puzzles and tricks that secured *Flashback*'s classic status. Most of the puzzles here are of the switch flicking type, not really the subtle intricacies of a great game.

With five massive levels to work your way through, and even meatier guns to collect on the way, *Blackhawke* is fairly good value for money. Unfortunately the plodding repetitiveness mars would could have been a very classy game.





Violence in his eyes, Keith Pullin levels his shotgun at *Blackhawke*, but will he pull the trigger?

HD REVIEW

Blackhawke

BLACKHAWKE

Publisher
Interplay
Tel: (01235) 821666
£34.99

Minimum System
386 SX (486 recommended), 2 Mb RAM, 256 colour VGA card. Supports all major sound cards and compatibles, joystick recommended

For
Gory and violent
Good atmospheric sound
Big and challenging

Against
Too repetitive
Poor graphics

79%

Bureau 13

Unlucky for some... especially Andy McDermott.

CD REVIEW

Do you watch *The X Files*? Are you a fan of the supernatural exploits of Mulder and Sculley? If so, *Bureau 13* is the game for you... perhaps.

The titular Bureau is supposedly a secret US government agency set up to locate and eliminate dangerous paranormal individuals. The current case involves one JP Withers, a rogue B13 agent who has attempted to assassinate a small-town sheriff. You choose two agents from the six on offer, and head off to find out why Withers' brain has gone AWOL.

Smells like 13 spirit

The point 'n' click control method holds no surprises; a cursor allows you to move around the various locations, and cycle through possible actions (pick up, examine, talk to, etc) when it is positioned over an object or person. It's unoriginal, but simple and effective.

> **Any supposedly low-profile agency that sends out a female agent wearing a silver bikini and giant Humpty Dumpty powered armour is clearly a few pages short of an X file...**

Each location is nicely rendered, if bland (though I admit it's probably hard to blow people away with a picture of a car park, however well drawn), but are prone to a common failing of graphical adventures – background objects you can't interact with. For example, one location, a hospital lobby, features several doors, but you can only enter one. The others might not be relevant to the story, but it would still be nice to nose around – a CD has 600Mbs to play with, after all.

In a similar vein, the gameplay is also rather restrictive, following the 'use object A in location B' puzzle approach that dates back to Crowther and Woods' original *Adventure*. Each problem has a single solution, and not always a believable one.

An early puzzle finds you trying to gain entry to an office in the police station, but access is blocked by the desk sergeant. How do you pass him? Lengthy multiple choice conversations ultimately prove fruitless, so the eventual method is – get this – superglue the fire extinguisher inside its cabinet, then tip the sergeant's ashtray into his bin, causing a fire. The sergeant can't remove the extinguisher, so he flees the building in panic – and never returns! One hell of an officer.

Bureau-cratic nightmare

The other puzzles are much the same. Illogicality rules throughout the game, in fact – any supposedly low-profile agency that sends out a female agent wearing a silver bikini and giant Humpty Dumpty-style powered armour is clearly a few pages short of an X file. Add to this the usual appalling acting of CD adventures (the aforementioned sergeant has the worst Oirish accent since Tommy Lee Jones in *Blown Away*), and it looks like the blinds should be pulled down on the Bureau.

Weirdly, though, since the game plays in the same pervertedly compulsive way as the old text adventures, it does possess a certain infuriating appeal. (Yes, I was one of those sad gits who used to puzzle over *Planet of Death* on a 16K Spectrum for hours.) However, I think that people used to the slickness of LucasArts' adventures will find this distinctly old-fashioned. Superglue the fire extinguisher indeed!

1 With his bin ablaze, the useless sergeant runs in terror. 2 Your quarry – JP Withers. 3 This video clip is essential to open a safe later in the game. 4 The menu bar. Note the 'low-profile' agent dressed like Kei from *The Dirty Pair*.

One of the six freaks, weirdos and oddbods the Bureau employs.

ALTERNATIVES

SAM & MAX
US Gold ● £39.99 ● 84%
Insane point 'n' clickery from the masters of the genre.

HELL
Gametek ● £49.99 ● 94%
Satanic rampage through Washington DC and below with Dennis Hopper.

DAY OF THE TENTACLE
US Gold ● £39.99 ● 95% PA
The best graphic adventure ever? Quite probably.

BUREAU 13

Publisher
Gametek
(01753) 553445
£39.99

Minimum System
386-33, CD-ROM drive, VGA, 13Mb disk space. Mouse essential, all major soundcards supported

For
Good visuals from the creators of *Hell*
Loads of speech
Simple interface

Against
Illogical, captain
Ghastly acting
Duff music
Old-fashioned gameplay

69%

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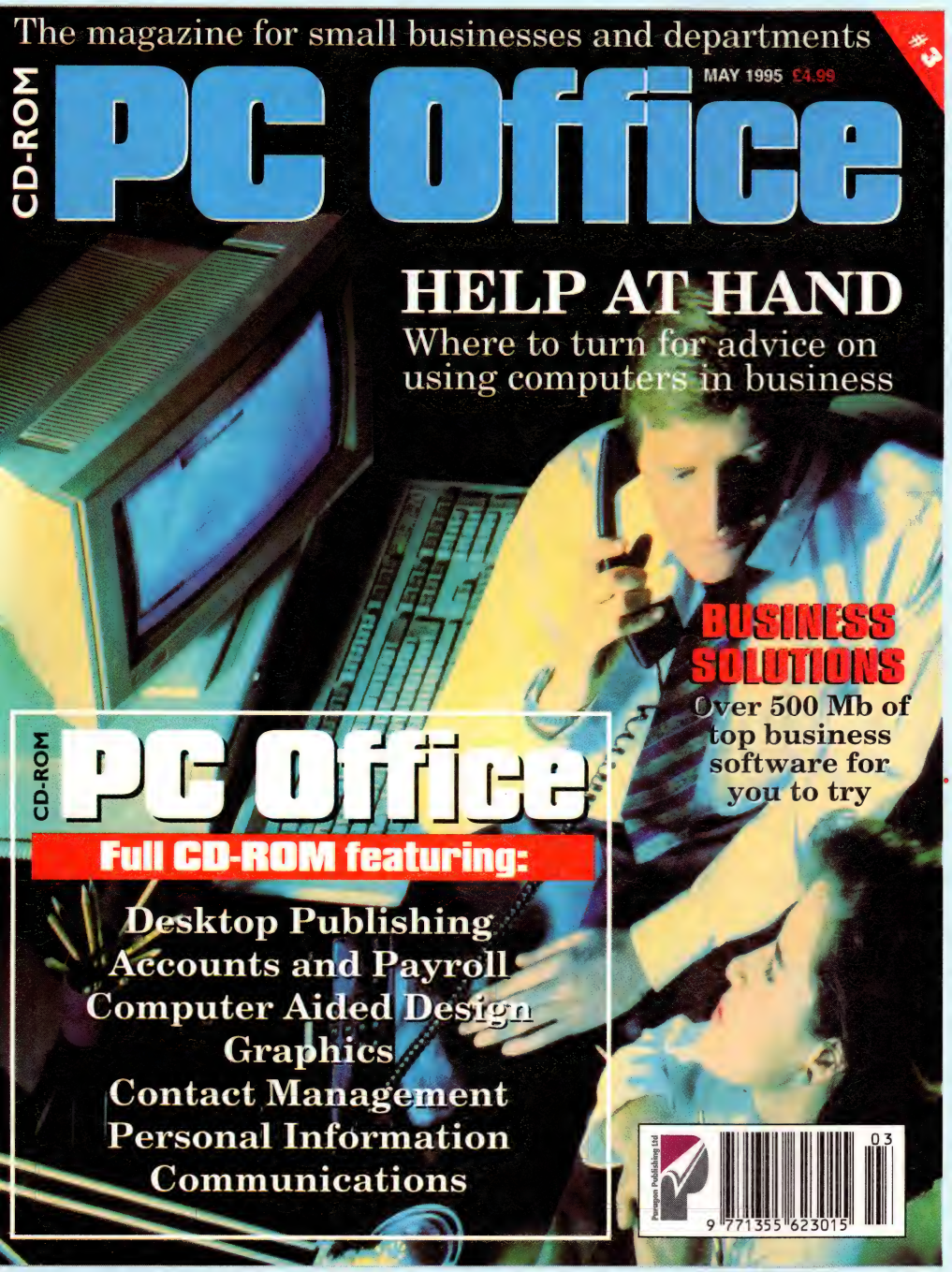

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Guilty

HD REVIEW
CD REVIEW

Shifty Keith Pullin steps guiltily into the hot seat and soars through the cosmos to scan Psygnosis' latest 'adult' adventure.

While threatening to blow a Jersey cow's brains out unless the driver of a Securicor van hands over his cargo, the last thing you expect to see is an enormous spaceship slice its way through the atmosphere, to hover imposingly before you. However, space adventurer, gambler, villain and womaniser Jack T. Ladd experienced just such a phenomenon, ending up a prisoner of flame-haired space cop Ysanne Andropath.

The game begins in the main reactor room of Ysanne's Millennium Falcon-type space craft: destination, the prison planet of Alkaseltz (ho, ho). You can choose to play as either Ysanne or Jack, the idea being that a different adventure awaits each character. You have five basic commands available; walk, talk, take, use and examine – real functional stuff.

> **Jack backs down with an "Okay, okay, I'll come quietly – which will be a first for me." Ho, and indeed ho!**

In the speech version (CD-ROM only) all the tone, accents and general clarity of the samples are of a very high quality. The script however is rather amateurish, with most of it erring on the side of corny rather than adult. Also, the programmers could have come up with something more interesting for the characters to do while they are chatting away, their constant arm swinging gives them the appearance of gesticulating French peasants!

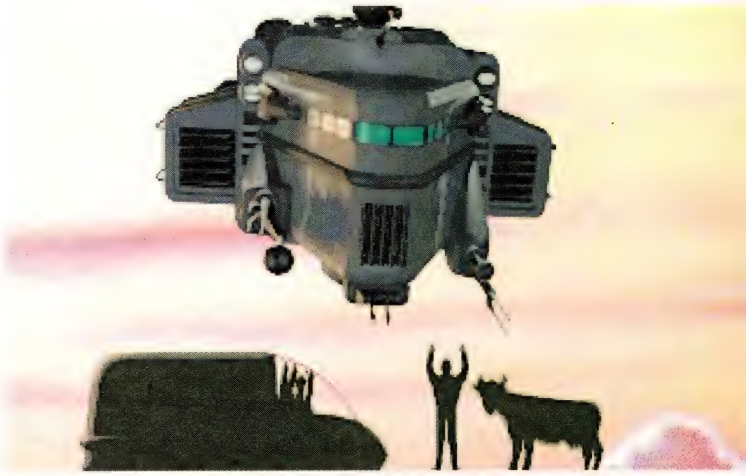
There are also a few *Carry On* style innuendoes thrown in, such as the one right at the very beginning where Jack backs down from Ysanne's rantings with an "Okay, okay, I'll come quietly – which will be a first for me by the way!" Ho, and indeed ho! That statement alone gives you an idea of what type of bloke this Jack T Ladd is, and as the adventure progresses you'll realise that he's the most arrogant fugitive around – a veritable Han Solo.

The unforgivable fact about *Guilty* is that most of the puzzles are extremely easy, until you come across one particular stage. There is a drilling rig on the ice planet which, after being fired into life, will extract gases and then discharge them through a pipe at the rear of the machine. To collect these gases you must attach an empty gas canister to the outlet.

Unfortunately, the area where you put this canister is only about two pixels wide. So as you move the mouse over this point it doesn't even register that there's anything there because the pointer skims past it so quickly. I was in that room for 15 frustrating minutes!

The whole game only covers five small planets, with very few locations each, and just doesn't possess the scope and depth of classic adventures like *Day of the Tentacle* or *Sam & Max*. Locations like the Casino don't have enough graphical flair to dazzle you and the only real brilliance comes with the scintillating cut scenes of Ysanne's ship flying around.

Guilty is an annoying adventure that should have been bigger, bolder and funnier.



Have you heard the saying – red sky in the morning arch criminal's warning? It certainly rings true here, as Ysanne's superb spaceship stalks the stunned Jack.

Entering this room as Jack will shed a completely different light on the situation as you will see an unexploded missile lying on the floor, beneath the hole.

The bridge of Ysanne's ship – an inhospitable place containing a cocky computer called Booba and a chair you can't sit on. Executive class it is not.

ALTERNATIVES

DAY OF THE TENTACLE
LucasArts/US Gold ● £39.99 ● 95%
Massive, inspirational, and witty beyond belief. Get it!

SAM & MAX
LucasArts/US Gold ● £39.99 ● 83%
Mad dog and madder rabbit. Sounds, looks and plays wonderful!

WOODRUFF
Sierra ● £39.99 ● 86%
And the Azimuth of Schnibble, no less. Weird, wacky and good fun.

GUILTY

Publisher
Psygnosis
Tel: (0151) 709 5755
£34.99 HD/£39.99 CD-ROM

Minimum System
386/33 DX (486 recommended), 3Mb (minimum) RAM, 256 colour VGA card. CD-ROM Drive, supports all major sound cards, mouse essential

For
Choice of two characters
Sizzling cut scenes

Against
Too easy
Too small
Very corny
Fiddly control method

73%

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Tower Assault

HD REVIEW

CD REVIEW

Keith Pullin shouts "Let's rock!" and promptly gets cocooned by the aliens!

Anyone who liked the *Alien* films will love *Tower Assault*. This classy overhead shoot-'em-up is sure to send acid shivers down your spine.

The game begins on a desolate planet outside a suspiciously quiet looking colony where your spaceship has crashed after a severe meteor storm. What you must do is a mystery.

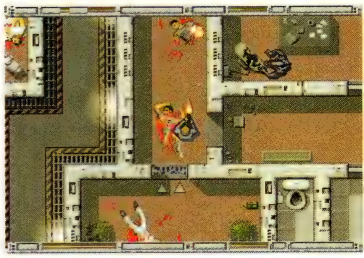
Both the one and two player games take place over a massive non-linear area that covers at least six different zones including science, research, medical and military. On your travels you acquire passwords that enable you to return directly to a previous stage.

A lot of time is spent wandering aimlessly through the massive tower complex, but some compensation is provided by the scenery which consists of piles of mutilated bodies lying in pools of blood along every corridor. If you want gore and don't like what *Doom* has to offer, then *Tower Assault* could be for you.

There are cards to pick up which give you information on the fate of the colonists and on what can be done to escape the planet. You will also find various weapons along the way, such as flame-throwers and lasers. All of these items are desperately needed, as the aliens can pop up out of nowhere.

Alien Breed: Tower Assault is a highly atmospheric and enjoyable shoot-em-up; well worth the money.

Any landing you can walk away from is a good one, goes the old saying. Not if you're about to walk into an alien-infested hell, however!



TOWER ASSAULT

Publisher
Team 17
Tel: (01924) 267776
HD £29.99/CD £34.99

Minimum System
386/33 DX, 256 colour VGA graphics card, 4 Mb RAM. Supports most sound cards, joystick recommended

For
Massive play area
Loads of gore
Atmospheric gameplay

Against
Can easily get lost
Aliens appear too quickly

84%

HD REVIEW

"Ribbit!" A frog's life is not all princesses and spawn, as Keith Pullin found out...

Superfrog

When it comes to cute, harmless platform games you can't go far wrong with this classic Amiga conversion. The idea of the game is to guide an incredibly agile frog through five kingdoms in order to reunite him with his beloved amphibian girlfriend. She's been kidnapped by one of those grotesquely ugly monsters that specialise in pointless kidnappings.

Superfrog is extremely easy to get into and surprisingly addictive after half a dozen or so goes. The graphics however, are outdated and the animation is far from convincing. The enemies are badly drawn and will very rarely divert from their predetermined paths, which means that if you do have to backtrack through the early levels, boredom takes a hold after a while.

But as with all platform games, there are a multitude of secret rooms to uncover so you'll still be discovering new treats even after you've traipsed through the levels a fair few times.

You can't complain about the price, which is a very reasonable 20 notes. Mind you, charging anything more than that would be a bit of a cheek.

This is better than *Soccer Kid*, but not quite up to the standard of *The Lion King* or *Lode Runner*. If you want a cheap, cheerful platform game then give *Superfrog* a try – it won't hurt you!

SUPERFROG

Publisher
Team 17
Tel: (01924) 267776
£19.99

Minimum System
386-33 DX, 256 colour VGA graphics card, 4 Mb RAM. Supports most sound cards, joystick recommended

For
Easy to get into
Lots of secrets
Very cheap

Against
Graphically poor
Repetitive

60%

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MicroProse

Across the Rhine
Navy Strike
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(0454) 326532 ● Spring releases

Across the Rhine

You'll be pleased to know this armoured warfare simulator from MicroProse is so historically accurate you could slide it straight between volumes 3 & 4 of the Gargantuan Guide to WWII.

Most of the game is played from a first person perspective, with you sat in an American tank taking on the German forces in a one-on-one action situation. Strategy, for once, takes a back seat.

Starting with the Allied landings in Normandy in June 1944 and continuing through to the end of the war in 1945, *Across the Rhine* covers historical battles such as the Battle of the Bulge and the Siegfried Line, as well as including a battle editor.

Navy Strike

Eagerly awaited, *Navy Strike* lets you fly an F-22 fighter, A-12 bomber or the FA-18 Hornet as you defend the world from over-ambitious dictators and heavily armed terrorist organisations.

As Task Force Commander it's up to you to determine the greatest threat, take appropriate action and make sure the political implications of your acts will not compromise NATO's 'peace keeping' principles.

With an army of stunningly rendered 3-D carriers, destroyers and cruisers backing you up at sea, *Navy Strike* will require a brilliant mind as well as a lethal trigger finger, so stay alert.

X-COM
UFO: Terror from the Deep

The sequel to *UFO: Enemy Unknown* is set under the sea. The idea is to stop aliens – who have been hibernating for centuries – from popping out of the ocean and taking over the world.

The system, while still turn-based, has been improved, with parts like the UFOpedia more concise and easier to use.

Bigger, and with new locations around the globe such as the wreck of the Titanic and the Lost City of Atlantis, fans of the original should enjoy this deep blue mix of role playing and action. Look out for it around April.

Star Trek: TNG
"A Final Unity"

You control all seven of the main characters (Picard, Riker, Dr Crusher, Worf, Troi, LaForge and Data) in a quest to find the mythical Fifth Scroll. This will lead the crew to an even greater discovery – hmm, what could it be?

Gallivanting through space with digitised images of the crew wandering around the bridge, you can set your course for almost any planet where a selection of sub-plots and classic *Star Trek* lifeforms await you.

Each planet is a bountiful feast of colourful exotic fauna and weird life forms. Endorsed by Paramount Studios we may well have a classic *Star Trek* game at last. March sees its release on CD-ROM.

Apache Gunship

Digital Integration • (01276) 684959 • June • CD

McDonnell Douglas' new super chopper is a war machine from the future. While the real life pilots are adjusting their brains to the brand new technological wizardry that governs its weapon systems, Digital Integration are eagerly beavering away on the game.

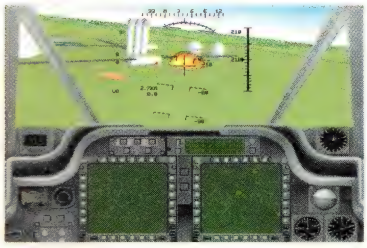
At the moment (and it's still a couple of months away from completion) *Apache Gunship* looks stunning. You can flick between gouraud shading, texture mapping or a plain landscape and there is also a choice of 640 x 480 or 320 x 240 as the screen resolution.

The chopper itself is highly detailed to the point where if you swap to one of the many external views, you can see the two pilots (well pilot and gunner) in the cockpit of another 'copter, as your Apache thunders past. The sound consists of digitised samples; including everything from the engine, to the whoosh of missiles and ensuing explosions.

The missions take place all over the world in places like Korea and Cyprus. There are three difficulty levels, but enemies such as the Koreans will naturally be better trained and have a much greater understanding of their equipment.

The programmers are currently trying to make the cockpit look as authentic as possible and are also including a system (which the real chopper has) that gives you a HUD in the pilot's helmet, which allows you to look around and select targets directly.

All the landscapes that you will find around the world have been exactly reproduced using a mapping package called the Digital Chart of the World; all the contours, roads, rivers, train lines, power cables – virtually everything – are exported from this package straight in to the *Apache* code. So if you're flying down a narrow, winding valley in Yemen, that's pretty much what it will be like for real.



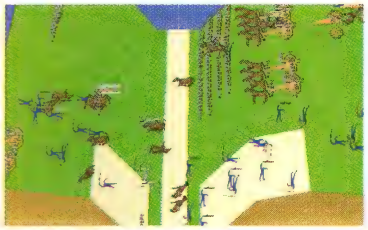
Civil War

Empire • (0181) 343 7337 • April • CD

Grab your blue and grey Patrick Swayze jacket and decide whether you're for the north or the south. That's right, the American Civil war is the subject of Empire's new strategy offering.

Civil War is played over a four year period starting in 1861 and ending in 1864. As well as offering the standard crashing cannons and horseback battles, you can also try to solve the economic problems that almost ripped the country apart.

Little known aspects from the war such as sea and river battles are also covered and it even goes so far as to allow you to blockade sea ports.



We all know what the outcome of the war was, but with *Civil War* you can choose to be either side and you may even change history!

The battles themselves are fought on ultra detailed rendered landscapes. Churches, farms and houses are all visible as the infantry and cavalry charge through valleys and clamber up ridges to reach the enemy. Eventually you will even see the piles of bodies as they accumulate on the battlefield!

One of the few strategy games to run entirely in SVGA and containing a built-in encyclopaedia covering everything from battle songs to the key generals, *Civil War* should not only be an involving game, but also a valuable learning tool.

GOTCHA!

Interplay will be hitting the shops soon with a deluge of quality titles. First up is *Kingdom: The Far Reaches*, which is a point 'n' click adventure featuring tons of FMV, fully rendered animation, cartoon link sequences, and a huge playing area. The plot is simple, you must stop the evil wizard, Torlock, by finding the five pieces of a magic amulet called The Hand. *Kingdom: The Far Reaches* won't be released until July on CD-ROM, so you'll have to wait until then to fulfil the prophecy.

Also from Interplay soon is *Dungeon Master 2: The Legend of Skullkeep*, the sequel to one of the most famous games ever. This time as well as the dungeon exploration you get to journey outside and fight more fantastical monsters than you ever thought possible. Four years in the making, the game will be released in the summer on PC CD-ROM only.

In *Frankenstein – Through the Eyes of the Monster* you, shock upon shocks, play the dastardly doctor's creation and not the mad scientist himself. Role reversals ahoy! Starring Tim Curry as the Doc, this 3-D adventure sees Franky explore the catacombs, gardens and secret passages of the castle in a quest to locate his lost daughter.

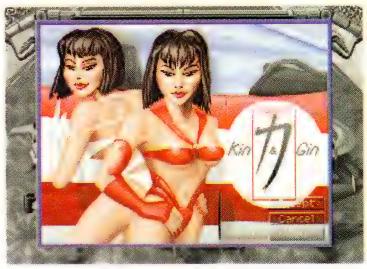
On the horizon this month is Cyberdreams' *Dark Seed 2*, the sequel to the HR Giger-inspired point 'n' click adventure that PC POWER promoted heavily last year. This game is even bigger and features some terrific SVGA locations. Also from the London-based company is the HR Giger screen saver (see review in this issue) and the incredibly named *I Have No Mouth But I Must Scream*.

Codemasters are about to release a PC CD-ROM version of the game that no Mega Drive owner can do without. *Micro Machines 2*, with its 51 tracks and 17 vehicles is one of the most eagerly awaited multi-player racing games of the year. *Micro Machines 2* is also renowned for its strange locations; after al,l there are not many games where you race around a bath tub! Make sure your driving gloves are on this May.

***Campaign* from Empire is** already established as one of the great World War 2 strategy games, so they're about to enhance that reputation with a CD-ROM version. Rounding off Empire's batch of spring releases is *Red Ghost* another strategy game which lets you control a host of vehicles and featuring a new 3-D graphics technique known as Rayscaping. Sounds intriguing, all will be revealed in May. ▶

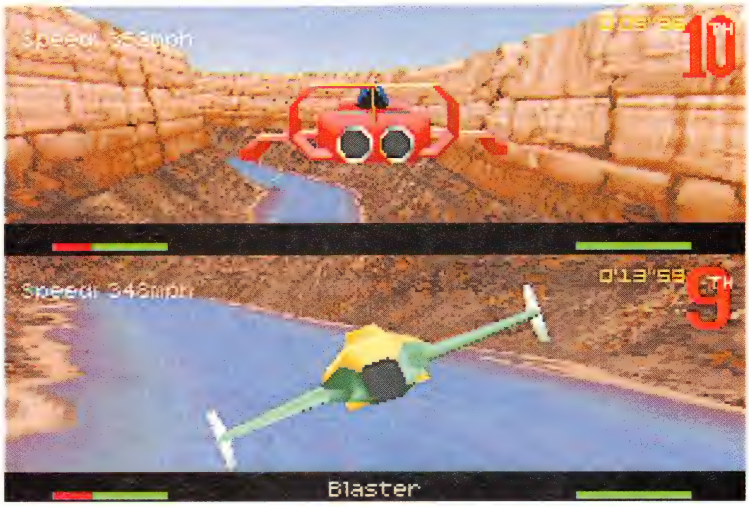
Slipstream 5000

Gremlin • (01742) 753423 • March • CD



Do you remember *Powerdrome*? It was released on the Amiga and Atari ST about six years ago. Well, *Slipstream 5000* is a first person perspective, futuristic racing game along similar lines and it's going to be released for your PC CD-ROM very soon.

One of reasons why *Slipstream* should blow every other racing game away is the lightning quick *Doom*-type engine. It powers you through ten looped courses, each one consisting of highly detailed texture mapped floors and walls that can draw your attention – fatally!



You and nine other Slipstreamers skim your way at over 300mph through the pyramids of Egypt, canyons of Colorado and even the German Black Forest. If anybody gets in your way then you can blast them out of it using a host of weapon power-ups and customisations.

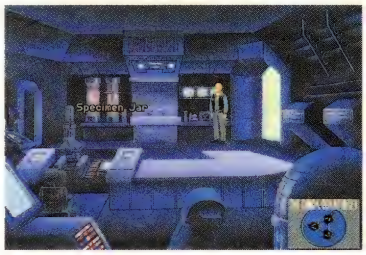
Wisely, the programmers have been careful to ensure this is not just another 3-D shoot-'em-up, and so pit stops and tricky short cuts are predominant features.

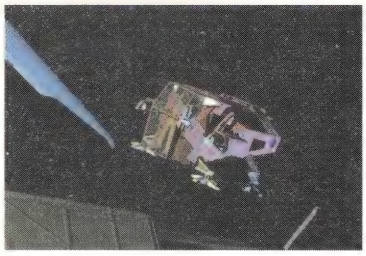
With all outside views light sourced, complete with shadows, it has to be said that *Slipstream 5000* is currently looking very special indeed. Most of the gameplay is currently intact and got us weaving and ducking as the craft hurtled breath-takingly around blind bends and down deep trenches.

The four player network link-up and the two player split screen options will add that extra spice to the action, and if we're lucky the whole thing will be topped off with some running commentary. Definitely an early contender for game of the year, look to the pages of PC POWER for a review soon.

The Orion Conspiracy

Domark • (0181) 780 2222 • March • CD





The Orion Conspiracy is a tense new point 'n' click adventure from London based whizzkids 'Divide by Zero', whose recent releases include the very reasonable *Guilty*.

The complex plot, which twists and turns like a Tory MP, revolves around Devlin Marshall; a grief stricken father whose son was accidentally killed while working on the Cerberus research station. Whilst visiting the space station to attend the funeral, a note is passed to Devlin implying that his son's death was no accident. Desperate to discover the truth, Devlin begins his epic journey.

Every location you visit (there are 270 in total) is displayed in full SVGA. There is full speech throughout which will hopefully feature the voice of a famous actor in the final version.

A discreet interface helps you solve the many puzzles that you will encounter and smooth animation on actions such as shoving mouldy food down a hollow pipe (yep, it's one of those totally illogical kind of adventures), give Devlin a life-like presence.

It's the type of game that will appeal to adults more than kids, with some straightforward talking and the occasional crude comment or innuendo. Watch for *The Orion Conspiracy* this Spring.

NBA Live '95

EA • (01753) 549442 • March • CD

Not content to blanket the console market with their licensed sports titles, Electronic Arts are now starting to spill their wares onto the PC. Using the same game engine as *FIFA International Soccer*, *NBA Live '95* gives you a choice of two 3-D isometric perspectives. The first, in hi-res mode, shows the whole court; the other is a close-up view.

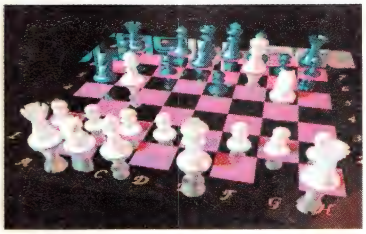
Featuring all the players from the '94-'95 season, 27 teams plus two all-star teams and a detailed trading option, *NBA Live '95* stands a good chance of being the most complete basketball simulation ever to make it on to the PC.

Spectacular dunks and high speed passes all blend into one as the players slide and squeak their way around the court. Unlike *NBA Jam* in the arcades or on consoles, EA have gone for realism, so there will be no more cases of leaping fifty feet into the air with your shorts on fire!

A plemtiful choice of options, including a full or reduced season and the ability to create your own Dream Team from the NBA's top players, as well as the standard spattering of FMV and CD music should be enough to make basketball fanatics everywhere drool as they dribble!

Virtua Chess

Titus • (0171) 700 2119 • March • CD



Once again the world is about to be shocked by a chess computer that is so intelligent it will do everything but polish the pieces for you.

The *V-Chess* game engine, written in 386/486/ Pentium optimised 32-bit assembly language, is three times faster than *Gambit Kasparov* and *Chessmaster 4000* and is so cocky it will even contemplate its own move while you ponder over yours.

It's been five years in development and so it comes as no surprise to discover that during this period it has been rated Amateur PC World Champion, 2nd at the Blitz World Championship, and has also drawn against the former champion of the USSR.

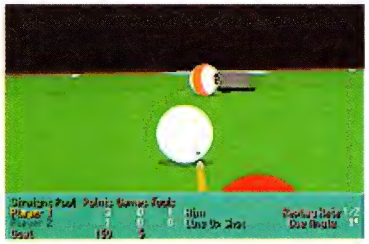
Virtua Chess has stunning SVGA, 3-D graphics with full freedom of movement around the board which adds a general user friendly feel to the finished product.

Blended into its data banks is a massive library of openings and classic moves, plus an understanding of little known rules such as 'en passant'. There are also promotions, a 50 moves draw rule and three times the same position draw rule.

Full tutorials for beginners and advanced players should give *Virtua Chess* an all-round appeal. Grand masters beware!

Virtual Pool

Interplay • (01235) 821 6661 • April • HD/CD



There aren't that many pool games for the PC at the moment, so this neat conversion of everybody's favourite pub pass-time (apart from drinking), will come as a welcome diversion from all the *Doom* clones swamping the market.

Just like real life you can view the table from any, and I mean any angle, and the pitch of the cue can be altered and swivelled for tricks shots. You can also pan across the table and see the pocket from the ball's point of view – crazy stuff!

V-Pool also has tracking lines that accurately predict the path of the ball when hit, and novices can use this to get used to the angles. With many different games to try, 35 different trick shots and the addition of an incredibly addictive network and serial link option, *V-Pool* looks to be the best cue game on the PC and a full review is pant-wettingly imminent. Check this out if you want to be as cool as Paul Newman.

The Daedalus Encounter

Virgin • (0181) 960 2255 • April • CD

Written by Mechadeus, the US development team responsible for *Critical Path*, *Daedalus Encounter* continues in the same vein, incorporating interactive film sequences. The footage is really classic throughout, with crystal clear images and above all great acting that does not looked contrived. The cast within the film includes Tia Carrere (Schwing!), and Christian Bocher of *Melrose Place* fame.

The game is set in the 22nd Century and begins in deep space where you are caught in the crossfire of warring space factions. Your body gets damaged, so your brain is removed and placed within a probe, the role of which you assume.

You find yourself in an alien ship that is heading for the sun and you must solve some tricky puzzles and then find the navigational console to prevent the impending collision.

The really fascinating feature of *DE* is that you can move between puzzles at your leisure or merely watch and be entertained by the audio visual experience. The game initially appears unstructured without any cohesive storyline, but the further you progress the more intuitive the ideas and puzzles become. A few of the puzzles are very Rubic, involving colours and shapes. Hieroglyphics also make up one of the puzzle screens but giving away this ingenious idea in detail would spoil the game.

There is the usual searching of the real time environment, talking to personnel and gaining clues. The aliens onboard are integrated with the animated and computer generated backdrops and give the game a very unique look and feel. In many ways this game is comparable to *Burn Cycle* in its surprise factor and very futuristic feel. Mazes, fighting, arcade sequences, multiple endings, three levels of difficulty, puzzles and exploration blend together with over two hours of Quick Time footage and should make for diverse and interesting gameplay! Review soon.

GOTCHA!

***Airpower* from Mindscape is** actually programmed by *Dawn Patrol* originators Rowan Software, and is basically an incredible looking fantasy flight sim, featuring some outlandish flying machines that improve on the lush looks of the WWI game.

The objective is to reach the capital city and lay claim to the throne, but you must fight other warring clan families in a similar vein to *Dune*. Your base is a huge zeppelin and from here you must plan your attacks on the enemy and you can take control of the many different planes at any time for a bit of shoot-'em-up action. *Airpower* will be out soon and you can see a full review next issue. No pics I'm afraid, due to a floppy disk wiping incident.

Are you a slaphead? You are? Then Gametek have just the game for you and any other follically challenged PC owner. *Baldies* is a *Lemmings* clone where you must guide and develop a tribe of bald goons.

There are five types of Baldy: Workers, Scientists, Builders, Breeders and Soldiers and you must use them wisely to get through the 100+ levels. Check out the news this issue for more info.

Finally this month, the Gotcha gremlins have secured some details on Millenium's new PC CD-ROM game, *Silverload*, arriving in April. The game is a lush adventure set in the spooky town of Silverload, Arizona. A once prosperous mining town, there hasn't been any silver seen for years, but still a small community survives. The mine was built on sacred Indian land, whose tribe had been massacred in opposing it, and a curse has been put upon the town. Now few people go there by choice and those that do are never seen again.

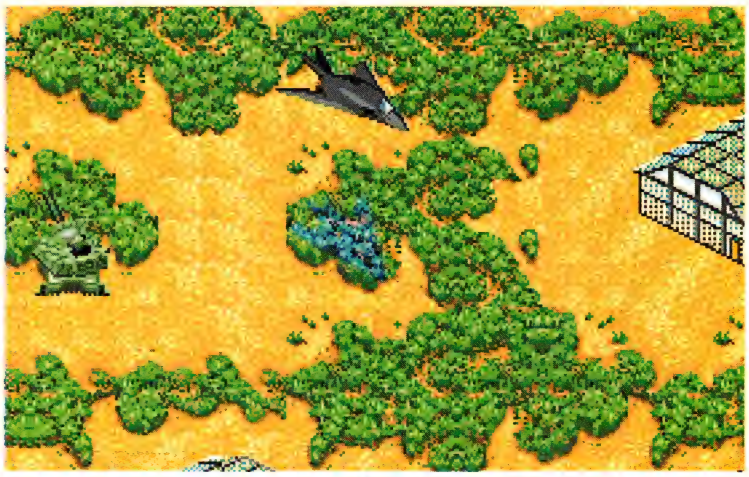
Silverload uses the SIGNOS point 'n' click interface making it enjoyable for all types of adventure/RPG enthusiasts. However, Millennium have decided to go for a gothic horror adventure using very adult orientated graphics, so it's definitely an over 18s game.

Silverload is a full screen, single player, first person, fish-eye type perspective game with you taking the part of a mean gunslinger who comes across a group of settlers who claim that wolves killed their horses and the people of Silverload have taken one of their children. They offer to buy you a new horse and saddle if you find out what's going on and rescue the child.

Millennium plan to issue a scene setter disc. This will take the form of a comic in text files bringing the player up to the game's start point. Look for it soon and remember, we saw it first.

Power Tips

Already plump with useful information to help you through your favourite games, PC POWER also needs input from you, the reader, to fatten up this section further. So if you know of any hints, tricks, tips or amusing little features in any game, send them to us now and you could be the proud owner of one of this month's software releases.



JUNGLE STRIKE

Passwords

Jungle Strike whirred its way into the office this month so we played it to death and managed to come up with a few passwords. Next month we'll have a level skip for you, so watch out for that.

Campaign 2 – Sub Hunt:
2MMMMMMM2
Campaign 3 – Training Ground:
2MNMMMMM*
Campaign 4 – Night Strike:
2MBMMMMM#
Campaign 5 – Puloso City:
2MVMMMMM-
Campaign 6 – Snow Fortress:
2MC——3

DESERT STRIKE

Cheat

Still a popular game, here is a useful cheat that allows you to skip levels and at the same time makes your chopper totally invincible. Go to the option screen and type **WATERFALL**, then press F12 to toggle it on and off. The great thing about this is that it also give you infinite weapons. If that isn't enough, try taking off, pressing Q and then landing again. With a bit of luck, that will also let you skip to the next level.

CIVILIZATION (v 1.0)

Cheat Mode

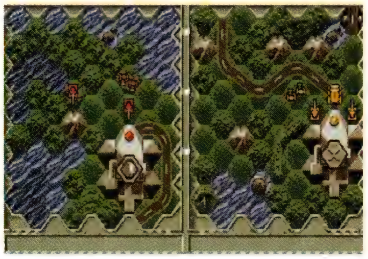
Enter the following key sequence from the main map area:-
[Shift] 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
If done correctly, the whole map should now be available to you, allowing you to view the mobile computer units at all times.
This cheat will also allow you to obtain extra information via the F-Keys 7 to 10.

FLASHBACK

Level passwords
JAGUAR: CAPSUL
BANTHA: ARTHUR
TOHOLD: MAENOC
COMBEL: ZZZAP
SHIVA: SHIRYU
PICOLO: SULUST
ANTIC: MANIAC
KASYYK: RENDER
FUGU: NEPTUN
NOLAN: NO WAY
SARLAC: BELUGA

BATTLE ISLE II

Level codes
1 – **AMPORGE**
2 – **JOGRWAI**
3 – **GEGIDOS**
4 – **WABODAE**
5 – **BUFASWE**
6 – **GEHAUWA**
7 – **OLARIBU**

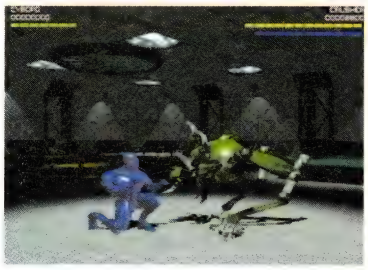


8 – **FITOTGE**
9 – **DAFATWA**
10 – **WABIKDO**
11 – **GEEUSAT**
12 – **KAIMAWA**
13 – **SIETIBU**
14 – **GEDEROM**
15 – **ULUARGE**
16 – **ABUNDWA**
17 – **LANADGE**
18 – **WAFEFAL**
19 – **BUSALUG**
20 – **GEKEFZU**

RISE OF THE ROBOTS

Cheats

All right, so we admit this really is a shoddy piece of software, but you know what? People actually bought it, eek! Anyway, here are some moves that are a little bit out of the ordinary.



Continually press the LEFT and RIGHT cursor keys on the options screen and you can match up the military robots against each other (this only works in the two player game).

On the one player game when you're battling the mechanical warrior, press LEFT, LEFT, RIGHT, RIGHT until the screen border turns blue. You can then play as the supervisor in training. Her moves are DOWN, LEFT, UP, RIGHT for the insectoid killer move,, and DOWN, RIGHT, UP, LEFT for the melt move.

RAILROAD TYCOON

Cheats

If it looks like your opponent is about to take your railroad over, quickly call up the menu and change your strategy from cut-throat to friendly. Now your opponent will stop buying you out and you can buy him out after taking control of his system. Once you have done this, switch back to the cut-throat technique.

Money Cheat

If you need money quick, go to the F1 map option and press SHIFT and 4 together ($). You should now have an extra $500,000 to spend.

QUARANTINE

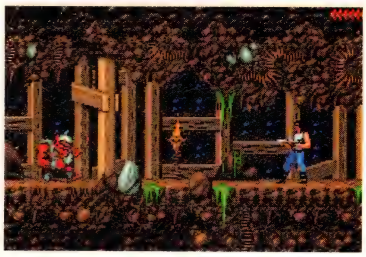
Level Codes

The Park: **Omnicorp is all knowing**
Old Kemo: **Keep the oppressor oppressing**
Projects: **The meek shall inherit zilch**
Wharf: **Have you had your hydergine today**
Outside: **Kemo city is a nice place to visit**

BLACKHAWKE

Passwords

Mines – level 2: **FBWC**
Mines – level 3: **QP7R**
Mines – level 4: **WJTV**
Forest – level 1: **RRYB**
Forest – level 2: **ZS9P**
Forest – level 3: **XJSN**
Forest – level 4: **CGDM**
Desert – level 1: **TJ1F**
Desert – level 2: **GSG3**
Desert – level 3: **BMHS**
Desert – level 4: **Y4DJ**
Castle – level 1: **HCKD**
Castle – level 2: **NRLF**
Castle – level 3: **J6BZ**
Castle – level 4: **MJXG**
Castle – level 5: **K3CH**



Cyberia

The chill continues in the second half of our solution to Interplay's cyberpunk adventure.

CYBERIA COMPLEX

Entrances to the Complex

There are two ways to enter the Cyberia Complex. The main entrance is to the north, and is guarded. To get there, walk north from your landed Transfighter, always staying as far to the left as possible. The alternative is a ventilation shaft, found east of the main entrance, by walking from the Transfighter and staying to the right. Precision timing is required to jump between the blades of the fan.

Computer Terminals

When using any of the computer terminals located in the Cyberia Complex, your arrow keys move between the different selections, the spacebar selects. The information you can access through the computer terminals will often provide game hints, so you should always check each room for any active computers. To use a computer, simply move next to it, and if that computer is active it will come on-line with an audible tone.

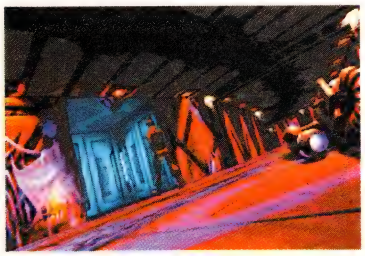
Computer Password

Only one computer terminal in the Cyberia Complex requires a password for access. The hint to obtain the password was given on one of the Video Mails earlier in the game. The hint tells you to go to the berthing area and look for a picture on the wall. Upon entering these rooms, you find a large portrait of Albert Einstein; giving you the password, "Einstein", needed to access the computer.

Red Pass Card

To pass through the door into the cyro-lab you will need the red security pass key. Finding the key is relatively easy, getting it is a little harder. The key is in the infirmary, located on the lower level of the complex, locked in a patients room that has been quarantined. Along the right wall of the room you can see the red key card lying on a table. On the wall are vents which are currently closed. Access the computer terminal in the room to open these vents.

Once the vents are open, you must go back to retrieve the card. Leave this room and take the first door to the left through the storeroom to the door leading to the red corridor where the lift is located. After entering, immediately turn to the left, and walk to the steel grating that blocks your path. Zak will push on the grating and it will fall, opening up a new passageway. At the end of this passage you will find the two vents you opened, and can reach through to get the card.



Mutagen Sequence

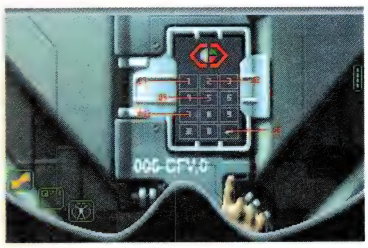
On your way through the complex you discover that an experimental virus has infected certain areas, and although a vaccine has been created, it too has become infected. Five of the eight vaccines have already been used, leaving three that you can use.

To inoculate yourself against the virus you must first go through the culture to destroy the infection. If you are playing with the Arcade Difficulty Level set to Easy, you must destroy at least 50% of the virus. On Medium Difficulty you must kill at least 72% and on Hard you must kill at least 80%. If you are successful, you are informed that the culture is safe to use, otherwise it is still contaminated and you must try another. After you are successful, note the number of the vaccine, (either 6, 7 or 8) and use that culture in the inoculation chamber. Note that you have very little time in the inoculation chamber before the virus kills you, so you must enter the vaccine number in the computer and move to the inoculation booth quickly.

Charlie Sequence

After you have inoculated yourself, you learn that some of the virus has mutated into larger creatures called Nanites that are infesting a portion of the complex. Since the infested area contains the only passage to the Cyberia Weapon, you must clear this area before proceeding. The only way to kill the creatures is to fly a remote unit, named Charlie, into the infested area. You must kill *every* Nanite before you can proceed past this point.

Note that the Enter key on your keyboard fires a shock wave device, which will kill all the Nanites in the immediate area. An alarm in the bottom right of your screen will alert you if any Nanites get past you. If this goes off, hit the Enter key immediately to stop the Nanite from escaping. The Charlie unit has a limited amount of energy available for its weapons



systems. The shock wave device uses much more energy than your regular weapons systems, and so should only be used in emergencies.

VISOR PUZZLES

Your visor aids you in solving many of the puzzles in Cyberia. During each visor puzzle, the F1 key activates the Infra Red Scan, the F2 key activates the Magnetic Resonance Scan, or MRI, and the F3 key performs a scan for Bio-Mass. On the right side of your visor is a small gauge, represented by four coloured blocks, indicating your energy level.

Perimeter Lock – Easy Mode

To open the Perimeter lock on the entrance to the Complex, toggle the first switch on the left, then the third switch, and then the second.

Perimeter Lock – Medium & Hard Modes

To open the Perimeter lock on the entrance to the Complex, toggle the first switch on the left, then the sixth switch, and then the third.

Security Door

First use an infra red scan on the keypad. This will display a reading of the heat from the previous person to access the door. The keys are cooling off in the order in which they were touched, allowing you to read the combination – 2571. After selecting the combination, press the Enter key on the keypad to open the door.

Elevator Puzzle

To close the elevator doors to protect you from the grenade blast you will need the combination which can be obtained from the H. Suzuki terminal. If you do not have the combination, you must return to retrieve it. Once at the Suzuki terminal you will find dossiers for the people who work in the Complex. The last record is for a new employee who has been given a temporary access code. Make note of this code and return to the elevator. You must enter the code quickly to avoid being killed by the grenade.

Pump Puzzle

After completing the Charlie sequence you are faced with the last puzzle in the game. The doors which lead to the Cyberia Weapon are malfunctioning and must be operated manually. To open the doors you must line up the four valves along the centre line. Each valve has a pressure switch which, when pushed, raises the level of the valve. To line up the valves you must press the switches to raise each valve in such a way that they will line up. When the valves line up they will lock in place and the door will open.

GUN FIGHTS

These are a fairly common occurence, and can also be quite tricky! Practice makes perfect – keep on trying, and you'll win in the end.

Guard outside the Cyberia Complex

When you reach the main entrance of the Cyberia Complex you will find a guard outside who begins shooting at you. If you get shot immediately, you have not followed the correct path to the complex, and should be sure to always stay as far to the right as possible as you walk from the Transfighter to the Complex. The correct path will lead to a shed that you can hide behind. To kill this guard requires the correct timing. Try to time your move between his shots, then lean out with the right arrow key and shoot with the spacebar.

Four Guards in Dining Room

If you try to sneak past the Dining Room, a guard will open the door and shoot you. You must enter the room to deal with the guards. When you enter, shoot the two standing guards, then duck behind the crate to your right. The two remaining guards will duck behind the tables and continue firing at you. You must time your attack perfectly to kill these guards. To fire from this position you must raise yourself with the up arrow, then turn to aim and shoot. Use the down arrow to duck back down behind the crate at any time.

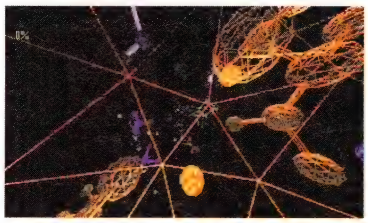
Guard behind Glass Wall

In the storeroom on the lower level of the complex is a guard behind a large glass wall. If he sees you he

will activate a Halon system, filling the room with poisonous gas. To get past this guard, notice the cyclic movement he is making between his notes and his computer terminal. You must sneak past him just as he turns away from the window. Once you have got past him, take the door out into the corridor. The first door on the left is the room he is working in. You should enter this room and kill him before proceeding further.

Two Guards in the Corridor

The doors blocking the corridor which leads away from the Halon Room are guarded by two men on the other side. To pass them, you must roll to the left just as the door opens. To do this, just press the left arrow key, and Zak will somersault to the left, taking cover. From this position you can lean out to aim and fire by pressing the right arrow key.



Conference Room

As you enter the conference room, you will find two men engaged in conversation about the Cyberia Project. If you try to enter the room you will be shot by the man who is standing. Wait until the conversation is finished and the standing man has left the room before you attempt anything. After he has gone, walk towards the crates to your left and hide behind them. From this position you can lean out to nail the guard.

Little Big Adventure Part 1

Stuck on EA's epic graphical RPG? Then fret no more as we present the complete solution in serialised parts. Keith Pullin guides the way.

CITADEL

Go into aggressive mode and a nurse will arrive on a moving platform. Defeat the nurse and then ride the platform out of your cell. When the platform lands, defeat the guard that runs at you and then defeat the doctor to get a key. Exit through the door to the west.

Defeat the nurse and then run through the right hand door to the north-east. Pick up the Holomap and ID Card from the lockers on the left-hand side and get the nurse's uniform by walking behind the screen. Exit the room and go up the stairs. Defeat the nurse standing by the alarm button and then defeat the doctor to get a key.

Exit the asylum through the double doors to the east, walk past the sentry and hide in the rubbish tip using discreet mode. When the dump truck pulls up next to you, climb in. After it has dropped you in the trash, wander around for a bit and talk to the locals by going into normal mode and pressing the space bar.

Head south into the next screen and go down the first sewer grate. Run over to the right-hand side and collect the clover box.

Go back up to the surface and make your way south through two more screens. When the mobile sentry droids appear, stand still - otherwise they will shoot you. You'll soon meet your neighbour, if you walk

down to the left at this point you'll see Zoe – your wife. When she takes you inside, hide from the guards using discreet mode. When they've gone, pick up your tunic and the magic ball and then leave through the fireplace.

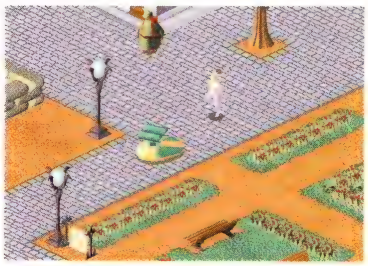
Go to the pharmacy, once inside pick up the red syrup. Now go to the port but do not attempt to buy a ticket – defeat the yellow Grobo guard and then use his key to go through the gate. Arrange the crates for the Grobo sailor and he will give you a free ferry ticket. Take the ferry to Principal.

PRINCIPAL

Go to Old Burg. Defeat the Rabbibunny clone and then chat to the Rabbibunnies hanging around on the street corner. One of them shows you a secret passage to the locksmith's. The locksmith opens a gate for you and you can buy gasoline and a Meca-penguin in the shop.

Talk to the Rabibunny near the shop, she will distract the blue Grobo guard away from the stairs allowing you to go up them. At the top you will find a grate, go through this and talk to the astronomer who will tell you about his friend in Port Belooga.

After the Astronomer, go to Peg Leg Street. Use the motorbike in the upper left-hand corner to ride to the water tower. Empty red syrup into the water supply. Leave the water tower and go to Funfrock's headquarters.



Talk to the Rabbibunny prisoner who will tell you where you can find a red card. Now go to the library and talk to the librarian who is over to the far left. He will show you a forbidden book about the Temple of Bu, once he has tasted the improved drinking water.

Go to the military camp. Search around there for a green vehicle which will take you to Port Belooga. Climb into the fisherman's boat and go to the White Leaf Desert. This is the main island.

WHITE LEAF DESERT

Talk to the old Rabbibunny who will tell you how to enter the Temple of Bu. Jump into the hole behind him, run past the skeleton and jump into the stone columns. Cross to the other side, jump over the spikes and head to the left. Run past the two skeletons laying on the slabs and go up the stairs. Follow the path along until you come to a room where spiky balls are being shot from the floor. Pull the lever at the bottom of the stairs in this room.

Go into athletic mode and run backwards up the stairs until you see the spiky log start to roll towards you. Run down the stairs and round the corner and wait until the log rolls past. Go up the stairs that the log just rolled down and pull the lever at the top. Go down the stairs and around the corner to the left. Go through the door and past the moving blades. Follow this path until you reach a statue.

Push the statue all the way to the right until the path ends, then push it off the path completely. Keep pushing the statue down the hallway into the room with the spiky balls coming out of the floor. Hugging the left wall, push the statue around the corner into the alcove. Jump over the ledge to the lever directly beneath you and pull it. A platform will roll across and arrive next to the statue.

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Hanging

Part One

More and more people are working from home these days, but to do that you need an effective home office. Ged Start explains the ins and outs in the first of a three part feature.

Computers have revolutionised the way we work, some would claim for the worse, I think for the better. Whatever your viewpoint, computers are here to stay. One of the biggest advantages of our digital buddies is that computers make working from home a practical and viable option.

Over the next three months, I am going to be looking at what's involved in setting yourself up to work from home. This is not going to be a glossy advert for tele-working (remote working using modems to keep you in touch with the office), it will be a realistic look at the pros and cons of working from home. Simple as that.

I will be looking at the different options and methods of working from home; book-keeping, fax/modems, Email, essential software and legal requirements. I will also look into some of the problems that affect home-workers, like self-discipline and the isolation of being at home all the time.

Firstly, I am going to look at some of the types of work that can be done from home. Obviously, some professions preclude working from home as an option.

There are four general categories which cover most types of Home Office (there are always exceptions, but they are rare). First, and most common, is the self-employed

Out In

tradesman – mobile mechanic, hairdresser, plumber and so on. For these people, the computer acts as book-keeper, prepares invoices and quotes and acts as an electronic diary. The computer is used as a support for the business rather than the core.

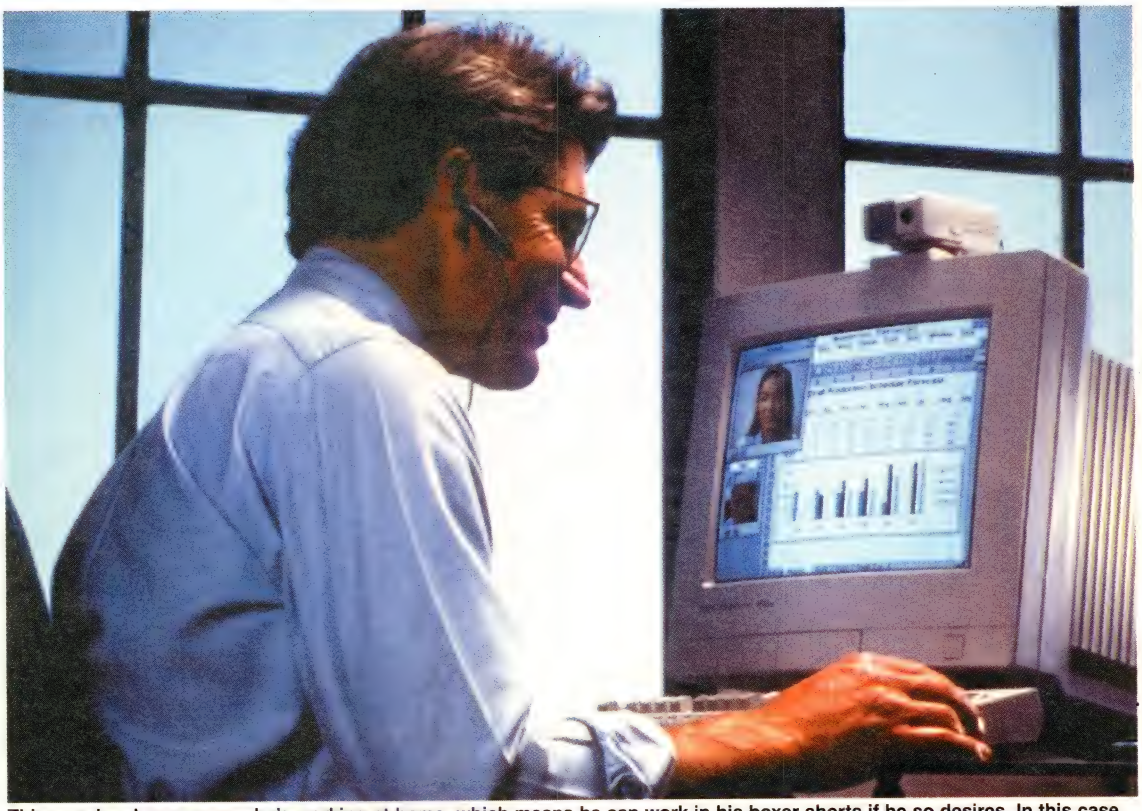
Next comes the self-employed contractors who use the computer all the time. These include freelance journalists, writers, designers, architects, accountants, book-keepers and secretaries, to name a few. Many of these people need tele-working facilities with their computer, but each case has to be judged on its own merits.

The third group is probably the fastest growing and is certainly the most thought-provoking of them all. This is the group of employees being offered the chance to work from home for their companies. This is true tele-working. From the companies' perspective, it is a good move.

With a significant amount of the workforce working from outside the office, they can save a fortune on maintaining expensive offices and in-house support services. There are a lot of potential pitfalls and questions need to be answered before pursuing this line.

The final group includes people like myself. People who, for whatever reason, spend part of their time working from an office and part tele-working from home. Others who work like this includes people like doctors, accountants and so on. In my case, a lot of my work testing equipment (especially things like electronic musical instruments) would be extremely disruptive in a confined office.

For the latter three categories, the introduction of effective and affordable video conferencing facilities will make a massive difference over the next few years. Contrary to popular belief, video conferencing is not a bank of television sets which puts you in a group discussion with a dozen different people. While this is possible, most video conferencing systems are one-to-one and include the facility to share computer programs and data during the course of the conference. More on this later.



This man is a happy man – he's working at home, which means he can work in his boxer shorts if he so desires. In this case, he desires, but fortunately we've been spared the sight of his *Flintstones* grots by careful cropping.

Setting up

In this section I will discuss organising your home office effectively. I am assuming that you already own a suitable PC and printer. If you don't, read the section on *Buying Hardware* first.

One of the hardest things about working from home is the self-discipline required. This is a two-way street, it's not just a case of getting on with the work, but also of knowing when to stop. The simplest method of addressing this is to create an office in the real physical sense. To give you an example, this is how I've organised myself.

My Home Office is located in the spare bedroom. In it, I have a good sized computer desk with bookshelves, a small filing cabinet, a good comfortable office chair, an armchair, a radio and a telephone point. I also have a coffee maker and a supply of milk to last the day.

Once I have entered this room, I am 'at work'. I only leave the office for a call of nature. A purpose-built computer desk is more ergonomic than a table or an ordinary office desk and most have a sliding tray for the keyboard which saves space when not typing. The need for book shelves is self-explanatory, the filing cabinet, as well as its main function, is used for storing spare leads, cables and so on, as well as office stationery – computer desks don't have drawers.

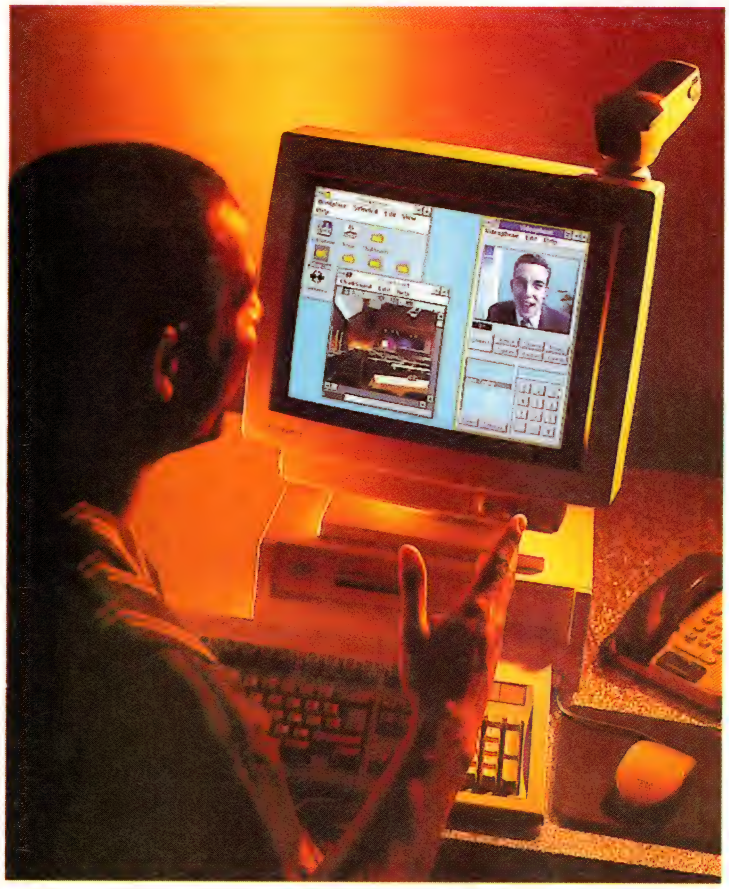
A good chair is essential. Apart from the immediate considerations of comfort, there are the potential dangers of back problems in the future. The armchair serves two purposes; somewhere away from the desk for when I need to read manuals or reference books, and somewhere for visitors to sit. The radio is good company during the day, it also keeps me up-to-date with news and gives me regular time checks.

The telephone point should be obvious, but it's surprising how many people don't have their phone in their office. The phone is both friend and foe. It's the essential link with the outside world and the source of continuous interruptions. Because it's an interruption it needs to be close to hand. If you have to leave your place of work to answer it then something is seriously wrong.

Not everyone is fortunate enough to have a complete room – even a small one – that can be dedicated to the task. If this is the case, it should still be possible to determine a specific area or corner of a room that becomes the office for the course of the working day.

With the office set up the way you want, the next stage is to impose a working routine. Many people can do this naturally, others (myself included) have to work at it. If you are bad at routine, then set realistic goals and targets. Have set times for going to work, breaking for lunch, and finishing work. Know what you are going to be working on and how far you expect to get during the course of the day. Monitor interruptions and keep a note of how long you spend on the phone. That way, if you end up behind your target at the end of the day, you will be able to see where you got held up.

Finally, be adaptable. Working from home is not as easy as it sounds, so you have to be prepared



Video Conferencing

Over the next few months you are going to be bombarded with features on video conferencing, not only in computer magazines, but in newspapers and on television too. So what is it and how does it work?

In simple terms, it is a hybrid advancement of file transfer by modem and the video telephone. A camera is mounted on top of your monitor and connected to your PC through an expansion card. From your computer, you can then dial out through the telephone system to another computer user fitted with the same equipment.

When the other user answers, their picture will be displayed in a window on your monitor and they will also be looking at your picture. You will then be able to conduct a face to face conversation with your colleague. You can even hold documents and diagrams up to the camera for your colleague to see, and vice versa.

Now things start to get really clever, you can share data between you. For instance, say you've been working on an important document that contains diagrams as well as technical descriptions. You need to speak to the project engineer based in France to check the details of one of the diagrams and to get certain components labelled correctly.

You phone her using the conferencing system and explain what you need. She calls up the diagram from her hard disk and it is displayed on both screens simultaneously. You use your mouse to highlight the areas you need labels for. She types the labels in at the appropriate places. You save the information to your hard disk. You say farewell and hang up.

How you can use a system of this type will depend on your line of business, but the possibilities are endless. Creative Labs (the power behind the SoundBlaster) have just launched their Share Vision PC3000 system which uses the existing BT network of phone lines to do exactly what I've just described.

For more information on the Share Vision system, you can contact Creative on (01743) 248590.

to change attitudes as well as work practises in order to deal with the new working environment.

Buying hardware

Before buying any hardware, you need to know exactly what you want to use it for and who is going to have access to it. While I am all in favour of the family PC, this attitude changes slightly when your son and daughter are in a position to trash your livelihood. If you are only using the computer occasionally then, provided you have made back-ups of your work, there is no harm in letting the kids share your PC. If your computer is the core of your business, then buy two computers – one for you and one for the kids.

The key to buying a computer for business is to look at the software you will need first. A Pentium is no good to you if it doesn't leave enough money to buy the DTP software you need. Put together a list of what you will need to do, then look at software that will fulfil these requirements.

Everyone needs a decent word processor, and this can double as a basic DTP (desktop publishing) package. If you need proper DTP facilities then buy the right software, it needn't be that expensive. The next thing to consider is accounts; if you are going to be self-employed then some dedicated accounts/book-keeping software is essential. If you need to manipulate a lot of figures or create charts, then a spreadsheet should be on your shopping list.

Filling this list gives you the option of going for either Windows or DOS software. Generally, Windows software is easier to learn and use, while DOS software can be less expensive and will work with older, lower specification hardware.

If you know a bit about PCs and DOS, then you might consider the latter option viable. If you are new to PCs, then it should be avoided. A PC suitable for the current generation of Windows needs to be a 486SX or above. Avoid machines with less than 4Mb of RAM, and make sure that you get at least a 200Mb hard disk. These days, the cost of a multimedia kit is so low that you should consider getting the MPC (Multimedia PC) spec. This includes a CD-ROM drive which will make it possible to read computer disks with 650Mb capacity.

If you know what you're doing, or have someone advising you, then mail order is the most cost-effective way of buying a PC. If you are on your own, then buy a machine based on recommendation or experience. Computer magazines like this one are a good source of information as to what hardware to buy. Alternatively, you can buy from the retail outlets like Dixons and Currys. The only problem with the retail route is that the staff are seldom experts and the quality of the advice they give could be suspect.

Wherever you buy from, make sure you check what bundle of software is on offer. A lot of the software you will want may come free with the machine. Sometimes the same machine will be offered with different software bundles and this can include a specific home office set of software.

While you're shopping, don't forget to get a printer and fax/modem. The latter comes as standard with some machines, such as the Compaq Presario (stocked by Dixons and Tandy). The fax part makes it possible to send a document straight from your PC to any fax machine in the world, while the modem gives you access to the Internet, Email and direct file transfer over the phone.

Choosing a printer is not as easy as it sounds. Decide how you are going to be using it and what for. A colour printer is no good if all you want to do is prepare business letters. Never buy a printer unless it has been recommended or you have seen a demonstration of it in a shop, a dealer's, or at a computer show. If you don't follow this advice, you will invariably be disappointed.

As a rule of thumb, whether buying software or hardware, buy the best you can afford. The road to success is paved with false economies. Computer equipment does not keep its value very well, so buying the wrong thing can prove to be an expensive mistake.

Next month

Book-keeping and how to do it, effective letters and quotes, Email and essential maintenance.

Ged Start is Consultant Editor on Paragon Publishing's PC POWER and CD-ROM USER magazines.

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NOTE-ORIOUS!

Jon Kennedy and Damian Butt take the latest range of affordable notebooks for a test drive to see which offers the most portable power.

Way back in the distant past, round about the time when everyone thought *Wolfenstein 3D* was a neat game, if anyone had asked me about colour portable PCs I would have looked at them sharply and said something like "There are only three reasons why anyone would want a colour notebook PC, a) you are extremely rich and can actually afford one as well as a desktop PC, b) you have a damn good reason for wanting one (playing *Wolf* on the train back to halls of residence is not good enough, mobile multimedia presentations for your company is), or c) you are mad."

At least, this is what I used to think about notebook PCs – even monochrome models were expensive enough to make me cringe. Of course, the techie in me loves the fact that they are tremendously clever pieces of kit, but who in their right mind could justify laying out that kind of money on something that a desktop machine can do cheaper and better? Not me – I got a desktop.

And there's another snag; notebook PCs running Windows have a great disadvantage – they are running Windows. The disk swapping, the huge application programs and the memory requirements are far from ideal. Huge hard drives are fine when you have a large box to put them in, but 2.5 inch drives are expensive. And watching for a Windows pointer to surface as you drag it across the slow LCD display is not always conducive to your eyesight. If you have a DOS version of your favourite application, don't throw it away – it could be very useful for when you get a portable.

However, in the last few years the prices have started to fall and the quality has started to rise. Screens are getting better all the time, and PCMCIA cards can provide immensely useful features without compromising portability. For example, modem cards allow you to keep track of your electronic mail; all you need is a telephone socket and you can keep in touch.

As we all use portables at PC POWER for trips and keeping in touch with each other, we thought it best to compare four of the best colour notebooks on the market. But not the flash out-of-reach-even-if-you-win-the-Lottery models (IBM now have a P100 one for £8,000!), but the mid-range popular ones that give value for money and decent performance. Gentlemen, start your notebooks...

Toshiba T1920CS

If it's white and portable, it must be a Toshiba. Or something like that. Toshiba portables have a terrific reputation for build quality, and this one is no exception. It's been designed extremely well, with all the important functions obvious.

The lid contains the screen, and it hinges in such a way that the row of status LEDs are visible, whether the lid is opened or closed. The power switch is on the side, and requires holding in for a few seconds before anything happens, so you aren't likely to jog it by accident.

When you do switch off, a resume feature will store what you are currently up to in a special battery-backed area of memory. This feature is very useful as there's nothing worse than stopping work in a hurry and having to spend moments saving and quitting applications.

Squeezing a full-size keyboard into an area this size isn't particularly easy, and neither is using it. The position of certain keys caused a lot of backspacing when typing – that's when I could actually hit the backspace key first time. After a day or so, I was starting to get used to the new positions, all except the Caps Lock which would require surgery to be comfortable.

The positive click key action certainly helped, although the clip-on ball pointing device certainly didn't and refused to move the pointer left or right. Luckily a full sized mouse takes up about the same space in a pocket, and if you have a desk or nearby book it's much easier to use.

If you do happen to have a desk (and sitting something this weight on your knees isn't much fun) then you'll appreciate the hidden wonders in this notebook; it's also a desktop. Close the screen, open a few hidden flaps and you can connect a real mouse, a real keyboard and a real monitor. When you need to travel, unplug the lot and carry it out under your arm.

The internal screen may lack anything other than VGA standard graphics, but it's still very clear and extremely sharp. It's not an active TFT display, rather a back-lit "supertwist" which means any movement on screen causes very noticeable blur. Moving the cursor around doesn't cause it to disappear, but it's not pretty. However, using *Word for Windows* is a generally painless experience when you get used to the small size of the screen.

Perhaps the biggest advantage is the price. This model is now one of the cheapest notebook computers around. I'm almost tempted to sell my desktop and get one of these instead. Almost, but not quite.

SPECIFICATIONS

Name: Toshiba T1920CS
Price: £1,495
CPU: 486SX-33MHz
Memory: 4Mb expandable to 20Mb
Disk: Removable 120Mb 2.5" IDE
Screen: Colour 9.5 inch LCD, VGA (640 by 480) in 16 colours, 320 by 200 in 256 colours.
Expansion: external PS/2 Mouse and Keyboard, VGA monitor port. PCMCIA slot. Memory, printer and serial ports.
Weight: 3.2 Kg
Battery: Single NiH2 rechargeable cell.

RATINGS

QUALITY	★★★
FEATURES	★★
SCREEN	★
BATTERY LIFE	★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★
OVERALL	★★★

Texas Intruments Travelmate 4000M

To me, Texas Instruments were always the cheap calculators that were given out during Maths lessons; you know, the ones with the orange power button. It was with this outdated view that I greeted the 4000M, but what a machine it is. Out of the four, this has to be the most impressive looking notebook and TI even had the great idea of sending me the optional docking CD drive (for £699 extra) so that while conducting this test I could play all my favourite CDs. Perfect.

But to business, and the facts. The Travelmate 4000M has a dual scan active matrix colour screen of approximately 8.5 inches, and the notebook itself is the middle of the range (but still highly spec'd) 50MHz SX2, with an ample 340Mb hard drive. The TI also comes with built in multimedia capabilities which include Intel's Indeo video and an integrated Jazz 16-bit sound card, plus a microphone, speaker, 16-bit bi-directional MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) and CD Audio, in case you want to play music CDs using a docking station.

The keyboard itself is light and very easy to use; being well laid out and not small enough to fudge key commands at high speed. TI have also maximised the space available, with only a large slab of plastic at the top which houses the ultra light battery pack. There is also a neat standby button next to the power, which allows the screen to be switched off while your work is still loaded. It also automatically powers down if you leave the screen, and thus acts as an automatic *After Dark* program, just like the old calculators.

The screen is very high quality and remains clear at all times, unless the batteries get low, when it dims slightly. The colour is also very rich through this 640x480 screen that displays 256 colours, even allowing you to play *Doom*!

The case of the 4000M is sturdy and made from high quality plastic, as you would expect for nearly £3,000, but what really impressed me was the nifty built-in mouse, that resembles and feels like you're using a pencil rubber. The little red rubber dot may look like an auto-destruct trigger, but in fact works well, and even responds to hard inputs with a faster response time.

The software included with the 4000M is Windows for Work Groups, a Phoenix PCMCIA Card and plenty of other video and sound utilities. The notebook can also be upgraded via the PCMCIA type III slots which means you can install fax/modem and Ethernet capabilities easily. The only annoying thing I found was the lack of a volume control unless you have the CD player.

The TI 4000M is the most accomplished notebook I've ever seen, with perfect handling and ultra light controls. The best of the bunch in my opinion, now try and win one on the next page!

SPECIFICATIONS

Name: TI Travelmate 4000M
Price: £2,200
CPU: 486SX2-50MHz
Memory: 4Mb expandable with cards to 20Mb
Disk: Removable 270Mb 2.5" IDE
Screen: Colour 8.5 inch LCD, VGA (640 by 480) in 256 colours.
Expansion: Portable CD-ROM docking system, PCMCIA 14.4k bps data send modem/fax, PCMCIA Token Ring card, Ethernet Card, PS/2 numeric keypad, printer & serial ports.
Weight: 2.5 Kg
Battery: Single NiMH rechargeable cell (3-5 hours cap)

RATINGS

QUALITY	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★
SCREEN	★★★★★
BATTERY LIFE	★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★
OVERALL	★★★★★

Opti S-Platinum TS30MNC

The first thing that strikes you when using the Opti Platinum is the grainy screen. Compared to the other machines in this group test, the black of MS-DOS seems faded and 'bitty'. This is definitely nothing to do with the battery, as even a full charge did not affect it. I can only assume that either this is the same for all Opti's, or that we had a duff model. However this did not affect the Platinum's outright performance which was pretty good and at 10 inches, it is the biggest screen here.

The model tested here is the STN Colour 486SX2-50MHz version, with an optional 4Mb RAM extension and a 270Mb hard drive and 16-bit sound. As with all the notebooks featured, it is the most popular one in the Opti range and falls in the mid of the product range.

Aesthetics first. The Opti is a bit bland compared to the TI or Toshiba (only because the latter's in brilliant white – Ed) and because the battery pack is located at the front, the keys are set way back against the screen. The keys are also more squashed than the other notebooks, causing some typing errors if you don't have pianist's digits.

However, after a long stint, the body becomes accustomed to the Opti, and the rippled plastic over the battery forms a natural wrist rest that is actually more comfortable than it looks. The mouse is also excellent, but then it's a conventional track ball with standard buttons.

One thing that really impressed me about the Opti is the slender LCD display set just below the main 9.5" screen. This provides you with handy data like the battery status, floppy and PCMCIA activity and battery charge. With a portable, this is essential at-a-glance information and all the others get over the problem by using various coloured lights which can be confusing. With the Opti you know exactly where you are.

In terms of display the Opti is in my opinion the worst here. When you enter Windows and dart the mouse pointer over the screen, it drags an elongated 'conga' of faded doubles wherever it goes. This is incredibly annoying and the resultant blur makes quick use with the mouse unnecessarily difficult. None of the other notebooks suffered from mouse blur as badly as the Opti. Not a major point you may think, but remember, despite being the cheapest model here, it is still £1500!

Overall, the Opti is a cheap and perfectly competent notebook which has some great features, but is marred slightly by the less than amazing screen.

SPECIFICATIONS

Name: Opti S-Platinum TS30MNC
Price: £1,529
CPU: 486SX2-50MHz
Memory: 4Mb, option to expand to 8Mb (£170) up to 20Mb.
Disk: Removable 270Mb 2.5" IDE
Screen: Colour 10" LCD, VGA (640x480) in 256 colours.
Expansion: PS/2 numeric keypad, printer & serial ports, two PCMCIA for use with modem/fax, etc.
Weight: 3 Kg
Battery: Single NiMH rechargeable cell.

RATINGS

QUALITY	★★★
FEATURES	★★★
SCREEN	★
BATTERY LIFE	★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★

IBM Thinkpad 360

IBM, always the discerning choice for all lovers of matt black, so that includes all London financiers, designers and art critics. The Thinkpad 360 is an incredibly well made piece of kit and benefits from a large keyboard, almost unhindered by a bulky battery pack.

The screen on this notebook is fabulous; putting the Opti to shame and really showing what a portable can do. The mouse moves with quick precision and never blurs, and the pencil rubber mouse controller works well, as in the TI machine. If I have one complaint about the mouse control, it's that the buttons are a little crass-looking and lack the slick feel of the keyboard.

The keyboard itself is well laid out and each button depresses with a satisfyingly well engineered click, but you have to be careful not to hit the G, H or B keys when you use the mouse, as they are a bit too close for comfort. Also, the fact that you can clearly see the screen lock springs is a bit naff on such an expensive machine.

Once you've installed the software, the Thinkpad contains plenty of neat little gadgets for uses such as MIDI and synthesising, and the IBM's internal audio card is capable of some great sounds.

The IBM also has a row of lights between the screen and the keyboard that show you when the battery is low, floppy and HD activity and quite a few icons that I haven't figured out yet. Let's just say it looks like Blackpool with the lights off.

One feature that was interesting was the locking point underneath the casing. When you flick the switch, a small hoop of metal appears from the side. What a good idea, I thought, obviously with a padlock through this, the notebook won't boot up. Not so. The whole point of the hoop seems to be so that you can fasten it to a chain and then loop it around the nearest lamp post for protection. Hmm, I don't think it will catch on – my idea is much better.

Overall the IBM is a damn good portable that will live up to, and in most cases exceed, expectations. The keyboard is by far the best one here and fashioned in cool black, it's a must for all Darth Vaders.

SPECIFICATIONS

Name: IBM Thinkpad 360
Price: £2,165
CPU: 486DX2-50MHz
Memory: 4Mb, expandable (up to 16Mb)
Disk: Removable 360Mb 2.5" IDE
Screen: Colour 10" TFT colour, VGA (640 by 480) in 256 colours.
Expansion: PS/2 numeric keypad, printer & serial ports, two PCMCIA for use with modem/fax.
Weight: 2.75 Kg
Battery: Single NiMH rechargeable cell (3.5-7 hours capacity).

RATINGS

QUALITY	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★
SCREEN	★★★★★
BATTERY LIFE	★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★
OVERALL	★★★★

PORTABLE POWER!

WIN THIS TEXAS INSTRUMENTS NOTEBOOK WORTH £2,200!

You've seen the reviews of the four notebooks on the last three pages; wouldn't it be great to win one for free? Well now you can because those ever-so co-operative people at Texas Instruments are prepared to give away one TI TravelMate 486-50MHz notebook if you answer one easy question.

But first a bit of information about the notebook you could be winning.

The TI TravelMate falls in the mid range of the Texas Instruments notebook price list and features a 270Mb hard drive, 4Mb of RAM (upgrades available), and a high quality 8.5" colour screen that even allows you to play *Doom* on it!

This five star portable also includes plenty of ports to upgrade, and you can easily link up to the Ethernet or a fax/modem. There's nothing the TravelMate can't do and it's easily the best notebook reviewed here, we don't fob you off with rubbish.

So, to win this shiny new notebook, all you have to do is tell us how much the TI TravelMate weighs, according to our feature. Is it:

a) 9Kg
b) 2.5Kg
c) 0.9Kg

Jot the answer down on a postcard and send it immediately to us by 14 April 1995. The address to write to is *Portable Power compo, PC Power magazine, Durham House, 124 Old Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 1NF.* The first correct entry pulled out of Keith's trousers will be the winner and Texas Instruments will dispatch the notebook forthwith. The editor's word is final and no employees/relatives of Paragon Publishing can enter. Good luck. Many thanks to Texas Instruments for taking part in this competition at short notice.

GST Pressworks 2

GST • (01480) 496789 • £39.95 (£69.95 with Power Pack)

DTP is one of the most significant developments in the home office software market and it has changed the world of publishing beyond all recognition. Ten years ago, magazines like this one (and most of the other publications in so-called "niche markets") were not possible. The cost of producing such a sophisticated publication for so small an audience was prohibitive. Desktop publishing changed all that and is responsible for the vastly overcrowded market occupied by PC POWER.

But you don't have to run a publishing company to be a publisher these days. If you want to produce your own magazine, it no longer takes hours of cutting and pasting with a scalpel and Pritt stick.

Today, with a package like *GST Pressworks 2*, you can design a page of text and graphics in a few minutes. Adding a dash of colour is a piece of cake and glue never comes into the picture. You can even print your document to disk in full four-colour separations. The software which once was used to lay out the news in Fleet Street can now be bettered by a simple, versatile Windows program costing less than £40.

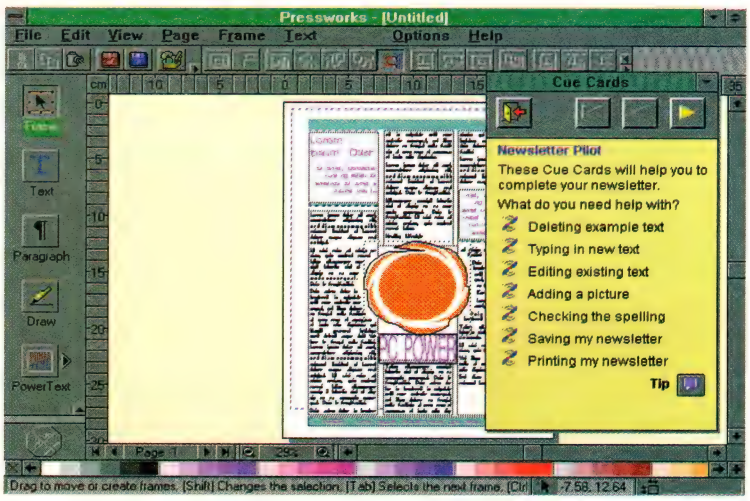
Page Pilots

The biggest problem with DTP has always been its complexity, which can be very off-putting to the beginner. Most publishing packages pride themselves on the variety of tools available for manipulating text, graphics and lines, but it is precisely this level of sophistication which makes it tough to get started. It's all very well being able to set up templates, edit paragraph modes and specify the hyphenation hot-zone, but if you just want to get your text onto the page it is a lot simpler to stick to *WordPerfect*.

However, *Pressworks* is ideal for the beginner. If you have no idea where to begin, its sister program, *Page Pilots*, presents you with a selection of potential document styles, allows you to tinker around with the basics, flashes up instructions, then boots you straight into *Pressworks* so that you can add the finishing touches. Within a few minutes you have a finished full-colour document without even having to read the manual.

For example, select Newsletter from the *Page Pilots* list and you are shown four different styles of layout. Without having to dirty your hands with "real" DTP, a series of dialogue boxes allows you to personalise the document, altering headlines, font styles, colour schemes and graphics. When you are satisfied that you have got a look you can live with, you can then enter *Pressworks* proper.

The are a wide range of options available, but *Pressworks 2* is extremely simple once you get used to the system. Each page is made up of a number of boxes or "frames" which incorporate text or graphics. The basics can be grasped very quickly and anyone with DTP experience will be at home right away. The desktop is a combination of GST's original home DTP package *Timeworks* and the classic *Ventura* system. The most useful thing about the *Pressworks* environment is the wide range of one-touch tools. Almost every possible function has an icon shortcut. There's no need to select 'cut' and 'paste' from the 'edit' menu – you can just click on a pair of scissors or a pot of glue. To save confusion, the icons fold up or grey out when they are unusable, so your options are always crystal clear.



"It's even better than the real thing," chortled the management as the designer blew a gasket.

GST have really perfected the basics. Everything you could possibly need to put together a leaflet or newsletter (and a lot more if you have the imagination) is right at hand. The excellence shows in the details – insignificant touches like a Clipart Browser and ruler bars for instant tab adjustments. With a DTP program it is essential that the crucial tools are quick and easy to use – anything which speeds up tiresome work has got to be a good thing. The spell checker can be a bit annoying (it fails to recognise punctuation, which results in a lot of time wasting) but the thesaurus is a useful touch.

Effects like drop capitals and decorative borders are very simple to do and the zoom controls are extremely useful for stepping back from close-up written work to check the overall page design. *Pressworks* does not give you the options for text manipulation which are on offer with *CorelDRAW!*, but its Powertext tool does allow you to rotate or mirror text and distort it in ribbons, spirals and so on. There are also 20 true-type fonts (100 with the *Pressworks POWERpack*) to break the monotony of Arial and Times New Roman. Unfortunately, text effects have to be typed in manually using Powertext, so you can't import a file from, say, *Microsoft Word* and rotate it 90°, which is a pity.

Who needs a Mac?

Although there are enough options to create interesting and practical spreadsheets, forms and tables with *Pressworks*, the system is not really ideal for it. You can get quicker and better results with *Perform*. However, *Pressworks 2* is superb for creating cheap but professional office stationery. Using a combination of sample documents and *Page Pilots*, it is possible to come up with letterheads and compliments slips within ten minutes. You can even get sheets of "Company Colours" blank stationary to use with your office laser printer, and perforated sheets of tear-off cards and compliments slips. True, perforated business cards are a bit amateurish, but with care the system could reap good results.

The Pantone colour system is universal and extremely easy to use. You have only to select a frame or a block of text and click on a colour at the bottom of the screen to change it. When your document is complete, you can see an on-screen print preview, either in black and white or colour separations.

For a professional print job, you can set screen frequency, printer resolution, knockout, overprint black, screen angles and so on. However, for the uninitiated, be warned: if you expect to walk into your local printer and get your disk turned into glossy leaflets, don't get your hopes up too high. The printing and publishing world is deeply within the realms of the Apple Mac and many typesetters will have no idea what to do with your PC disks. You'll just have to shop around.

Compared to its immediate competitors, *PagePlus* and *Microsoft Publisher*, *GST Pressworks 2* is streets ahead. Looking at the statistics, the number of options is impressive and the price is less than half of its predecessor, *Pressworks 1.1*. However, it is not the price or the sophistication but the simplicity of *Pressworks 2* which makes it such a winner. The design is faultless and will fit in beautifully with the progressive Windows 95 environment, making *Pressworks 2* undoubtedly the best low-priced professional quality DTP product available for the PC.

POWER RATING 89%

Rombo MVP-222 MPEG Player

Rombo • (01506) 414631 • £219

The MPV-222 turns any sufficiently fast PC into an MPEG video player through any CD-ROM drive. The system runs from a Windows environment and displays full-motion images in up to 64,000 colours. The screen can be displayed in one of two sizes, window or full-screen, plus the card can be connected to a normal household television or video player through a 'composite' output on the rear of the card.

As with most MPEG decoders, the Rombo must be connected to your existing video card via a 'VGA feature connector' – a small ribbon cable which extends from the VGA card to the MVP-222. Then a second connector must be placed on the monitor output of your video card and looped into the rear of the MVP-222. This technique, known as 'video loopback' allows the MPEG image to be added to your PC's display after it leaves the video card. The monitor then connects to the rear of the MPEG player, where the completed signal is output.

The card features controllers for Sony, Mitsumi and Panasonic CD ROM drives, but it will also work with drives connected through other interfaces such as SCSI or IDE. The only drawback to this card is the minimum specification of a 486DX-33, without which your MPEG video CDs will not run smoothly.

Jon Pyle

POWER RATING 75%

£ottery for Windows

VCI Software • (01923) 226468 • £14.99

It had to happen. The Lottery, staple Saturday evening entertainment for white trash everywhere, has surfaced on the PC. The imaginatively titled *£ottery for Windows* has arrived from the US and I have to say it is probably the most pointless piece of software I have ever come across.

The weekly appearance of Anthea Turner's perennially grinning features is enough to rile the most placid of people, but even the hour long Noel Edmonds opening night spectacular pales into insignificance in comparison to the crassness of *£ottery for Windows.* It really is *that* sad.

After taking five minutes to install, it creates a file under the name Edutainment. Chide me if you will, but this package is neither remotely educational or even bordering on entertainment. I have had more fun watching a Carla Lane comedy!

So what's it all about? Well, *£FW* lets you pick some numbers and then prints them out for you to scurry down the newsagents clutching a quid. Alternatively, it will pick the numbers for you, acting as a glorified carrier bag full of raffle tickets. Not only does it do this, but it will store the numbers in a database along with any prize money won. Yeah right, the first thing you're going to do with 18 million quid in your arse pocket is run a lottery program.

£FW covers more than just the UK's National Lottery, though. Unbelievably, it contains back records of dozens of redneck lotteries from all over America as well as Canada and Australia. Incredibly, if you're not happy with this selection, for a fee you can send off for even more old numbers on disk. Picture the scene; "I'm sorry, I can't come out today. I'm waiting for 1993's Massachusetts Megabucks lottery numbers to arrive." I think not.

£FW is no more than a sad attempt to cash in on people who throw money at the lottery in the misguided belief that they are neither gambling nor being taxed. If you've got £15 to spare and want to improve your chances of winning the lottery, then buy 15 tickets, not this piece of tosh.

Steve (balls) Hill

POWER RATING 10%

JT251 Tornado Analogue

Spectravideo • (0181) 902 2211 • £12.99

Unique in appearance, this hooked joystick is the only stick on the market I can think of that you can spin around on the end of your little finger! There is no reason why the end of it should be moulded into a plastic loop. One theory is that it stops your finger slipping off when you're firing, but how often does that happen? You must have a pretty weak grip if that's your problem.

As sturdy as it is bulky, the Tornado works well with fast paced, first person shoot-'em-ups such as *Novastorm* and even *Mega Race.* There are only two fire buttons, so there's no chance of configuring it for use with complex flight simulations like *Ka-50 Hokum* or *Tornado.* You're much better off sticking with a Thrustmaster if you can afford the necessary £200 – gulp!

Back in the real world, for a miserly £12.99 this is a perfect all-round 'stick. The Tornado is a definite 'jack of all trades – master of none'. But if there is a genre that it's more suited to I would have to recommend hooking it up to a driving game; *Nascar* and the new *SuperKarts* handle all right, even if there is a certain amount of play in the stick. What the Tornado won't accommodate are games which require precision positioning. It will give you two autofire speeds, but I can't think of any situations off hand where that will be useful.

As far as cheap, functional joysticks go, this is fine and you can even stick it to your desk with suckers. It's going to stay on mine for a while because it's the most comfortable, adaptable one I've found in the last couple of months.

Keith Pullin

POWER RATING 80%

TEAC CD-55A

TEAC ● (01923) 829630 ● £269

The TEAC CD-55A (why can't CD drives have catchy names like Zippy or Flash?) is the first serious step towards an affordable quad speed CD system. It undercuts most of its rivals by retailing at £269, and outperforms all but the fastest of them.

The drive arrived at our offices too late for inclusion in our CD-ROM guide last month but, for the sake of comparison, the same tests used in the guide were applied to the TEAC, and it fared well. In the random seek test (moving the head from one section of the disk to another) the drive averaged a very respectable 246 millisecond delay. In a data transfer test (reading continuously from the disk) the drive managed to squirt 553 Kb per second through the TEAC's own controller card, and higher rates should be possible through a 16-bit sound card.

The drive isn't just fast though, it's also one of the new generation of slimline CD drives. While the front panel still occupies a full 5 1/4" drive bay, the drive mechanism occupies less than half of the bay's space.

The TEAC loads CDs through a motorised tray, as opposed to the 'caddy' CD holder required by some systems. It's quiet enough to be almost inaudible, and it's compatible with the CD controllers on most popular sound cards.

To be fair to its competitors, there are faster drives than the CD-55A. Toshiba's XM3501B (just rolls off the tongue, doesn't it?) beats the TEAC hands down on performance, but it costs more, it's heavier, louder and requires a SCSI controller, which most people don't have access to.

Overall, a top class CD drive.

Recommended!

Jon Pyle

POWER RATING 90%

Giger Screen Saver

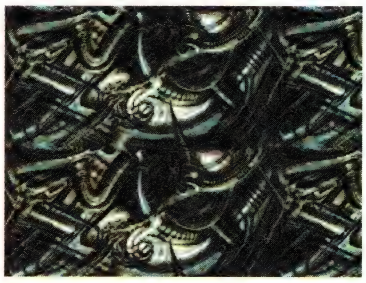
Cyberdreams ● (0181) 343 4818 ● £19.99

Screen savers have tended to be a bit on the dull side. That is, until the arrival of *Giger Screen Saver*. A bit memory hungry; taking up almost 5Mb of hard disk space, it literally dissolves users into another dimension – the dimension of the demonic Swiss artist.

Published by Cyberdreams, this collection of warped images is exactly what you want, assuming you're into brooding images and all things dark and abstract.

Not only does it give you a collection of ten weird and wonderful screens; all of them in a hi-res screen mode and containing a large dose of Terry Gilliam-style animation, but it also throws in a load of startling screams and screeches, rounded off with an eerie tune for each picture.

Once installed in Windows, your nice, neat little PC mutates into a swirling vortex of hellish sounds and visuals after a minimum of one minute. One of the savers shows two demons flying about with blocks of Giger artwork that they slowly piece together. Another shows a variety of ghostly images floating in all directions around the screen.



It is password controlled and has a calendar option that allows you to program a timer. For example, you could ask it to come on at one o'clock every day, just in time for lunch. Once it's on, the lock will automatically activate too.

Even if you've never appreciated Giger's alternative artwork, this is perfect for the person who realises they desperately need a screen saver for the sake of their monitor's health. With the wealth of options available, it has to be one of the friendliest and most exciting diversions from work that you'll come across. For Giger fans, well you will love to just drift away and daydream with a collection of your favourite horrors.

For everyone else, it's freaky, but mighty useful!

Keith Pullin

POWER RATING 85%

MMU 2000

Power Computing ● (01234) 273000 ● £299

The MMU consists of a double speed CD-ROM drive, sound card and speakers housed in a portable silver grey case. It connects to any portable PC with a PCMCIA type 2 connector and can also play audio CDs. It has volume control, earphone, line in and line out sockets and an internal microphone for recording sound.

The unit runs from mains or batteries, and a rechargeable set are supplied. Connection to your portable is simple if your PCMCIA ports are already configured. Installing the drivers is straightforward; select your portable type and let it install the necessary files. The ejection mechanism is a little plasticky but the lid feels thick enough to withstand normal usage and closing it sets the disk spinning.

The audio applications within Windows include an audio recorder, mixing desk, chime, clock, reminder program, stopwatch and a library of other sounds. While the 0.9W internal speakers won't exactly shake the room, they give pretty good sound quality.

The CD itself runs at the standard average access time of 320ms and can transfer data at 300Kb per second. The sound card goes by the name of ESS688 and functions fine within Windows, working in 16-bit stereo with a sampling rate of up to CD quality (44.1kHz).

Since it doesn't physically attach to the portable, the MMU has to sit right next to it due to the short connector cable, so taking up a fair amount of desk space. Another limiting factor is a battery life of 80 minutes for the supplied battery pack and only around 45 minutes with AA batteries.

In summary though, this is one of the best looking peripherals PC POWER has ever seen, it provides all-in-one multimedia for a reasonable price and looks excellent on any desk. If you are in need of the features it offers then look no further.

Recommended!

Geoff Spick

POWER RATING 90%

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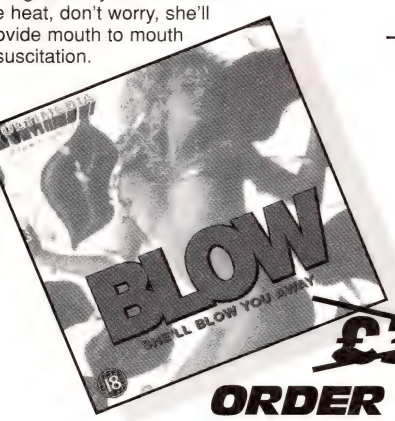

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WordPerfect 6.1 for Windows

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I suppose the title begs a question – what exactly is document processing for the Nineties, as opposed to what it was in the Eighties?

Novell/WordPerfect apparently believe it's electronic publishing, multimedia, hypertext, World Wide Web pages etc, because those are the capabilities they've packaged in the newest Windows version of this perennial favourite.

Getting onto the Internet? Want to prepare your own WWW home page? *WordPerfect 6.1* can help. It includes hypertext linking and other built-in supports for electronic publishing. These include linking of graphics, sound-bites and other documents.

Likewise, e-mail capabilities are built in. With *WP 6.1* you can send selected text or entire documents without ever leaving the program. All you need is to be running under *WordPerfect Office 4.0* or on Novell *GroupWise 4.1*, OBEX and Digital Teamlinks, or the various mail systems which use either VIM or MAPI mailing standards.

There are several ways of investing in *WP 6.1*. As a stand-alone program, it sells for about £210. But until the end of April you can pick it up as part of *PerfectOffice 3.0* for only a bit over £149.

This integrated suite of programs also includes: *Quattro Pro*, spreadsheet; *Presentations*, presentation-grade graphics; *InfoCentral*, personal information manager; *Envoy*, publishing tool for workgroups; and *GroupWise*, electronic messaging program for e-mail, calendaring and notes.

Word up

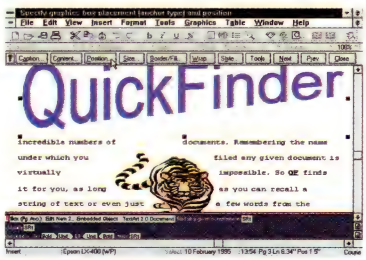
In putting *WP 6.1* together, N/WP's programming team worked with four major goals in mind:

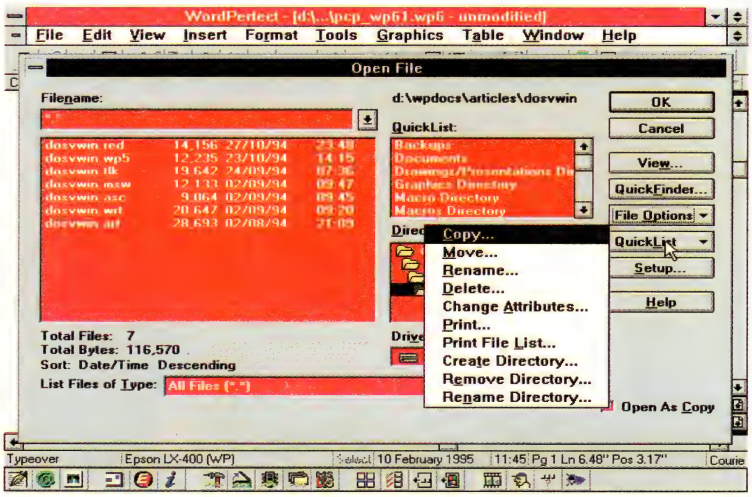
1. For you to be able to write better.
2. For you to be able to work smarter and faster.
3. For you to be able to make an easy transition from whatever you're currently using.
4. And for the program to integrate perfectly with the rest of the company's product range.

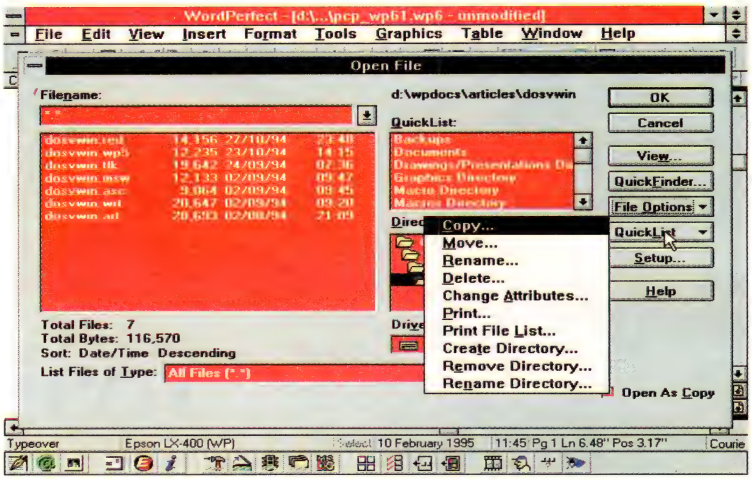
To meet the latter goal, the company came up with what it calls PerfectFit Technology. PFT integrates the various programs through a shared programming code base. This allows for a common user-interface. All programs use the same keystrokes or mouse clicks to perform the same functions. The programs also share many tools between them, including the speller, thesaurus, drawing module, file manager, etc.

Dozens of other new features show that the goals the programmers worked to were well met, and also include the new Grammatik (the company's grammar checker, included with *WP 6.1*) to suggest rewrites of your sentences.

WordPerfect's spell checker, thesaurus and search and replace functions are capable of automatically replacing virtually all forms of a word with the same forms of a different word. For example if you want to replace "run" with "fly", the find and replace (formerly called search and replace) function will also replace "running" with "flying" and "ran" with "flew." Clever stuff.







The spell checker's capabilities and flexibility has been greatly enhanced to allow checking a single word, sentence, paragraph, page, x number of pages, text box or the entire document.

It can be set to look for irregular capitalizations, word/number combinations, or to automatically replace subsequent misspellings of the same word.

The QuickFinder text retrieval program is another new add-on to *WP 6.1*. QF is an indexing and searching tool. It allows you to index most of the word processed, spreadsheet or database documents on your disk, regardless of whether or not those documents were produced by *WordPerfect* products.

Your searches can be for filenames or types, or you can look for specific blocks of text in the files using wildcards and Boolean operators (and, or, if, not, within).

This is a boon in this document orientated era. We all produce incredible numbers of documents. Remembering the name under which you filed any given document is virtually impossible. So QF finds it for you, as long as you can recall a string of text or even just a few words from the document and their proximity in the document.

For example, using the program's Boolean operators I could find this document by entering a search code of "WP and QF within three paragraphs."

The program's new Make It Fit expert eliminates your need to spend time changing fonts and other settings to either expand or reduce the number of pages in any given document. For example, the MD wants your financial report in ten pages or less. Unfortunately, it's been one heck of a year and your report runs to 14 pages. You could use MIF to reduce it to the required ten pages without having to manually find and adjust all the margins, fonts, table and graph sizes, etc. MIF does it all for you.

And for those of us who enjoy changing text and formatting time and again, *WP 6.1* offers us up to 300 levels of Undo/Redo, 43 fonts, 1,500 characters (multinational, typographical, maths and scientific and various others). Even I don't do that many alterations, or use that many fonts.

It's got to be-ee-ee-ee-ee-ee-ee... WordPerfect

Never used *WordPerfect* before? Not a problem. The program includes context sensitive help files, indexed help files, Coaches ("show me how to"), Experts ("do it for me") and a tutorial.

Even if you're not now, this implementation of *WordPerfect* could well make you a believer, either in Windows or *WordPerfect*, or both.

About eight years ago I learned never to say never. I thought then, using *WordPerfect 4.1*, that what few new features were going to be included in the then just announced version 5.0 would be surplus to my needs. I just couldn't imagine myself or my clients needing graphics, for example.

But as a consultant I got my copy, played with it and never looked back. It had so many features I'd never imagined and therefore couldn't know how handy they would be. The same is true of this latest incarnation.

It's tempting to say *WordPerfect 6.1* is about as comprehensive a document processing tool as anyone could want, but I won't. Not until I see *WordPerfect 7.0* in a couple of years, anyway.

Bruce Tober

POWER RATING 85%

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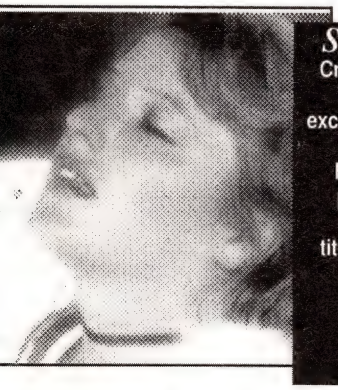

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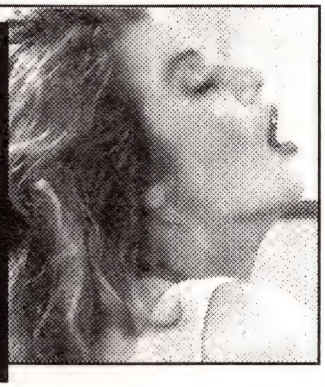

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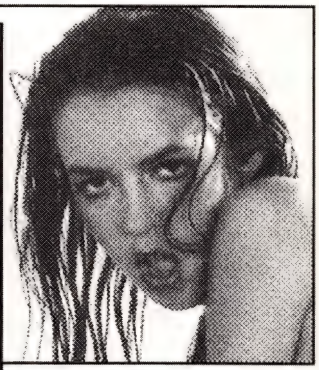

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When multimedia software is done well, it really is a joy to use. *The Complete Multimedia Bible* covers a subject matter that, while interesting to me from a fantasy point of view, does little else to inspire. Despite this, Compton's King James version of this most famous book is an absolutely stunning piece of multimedia design. From the opening menu (which entices the user in five initial directions) to the solid 'marble' slabs onto which the excellent Video for Windows film clips are projected, *The Complete Multimedia Bible* has the word "quality" written all over it.

The most important part of this CD-ROM is obviously the Bible itself – every chapter (both Old and New Testament), every Psalm and every word has been squeezed onto this disc, amongst many other extras. Other branches included Introduction & Information, Guidance & Inspiration, Maps, and Multimedia.

An excellent feature of the Maps section is that, if too large to be fully detailed in a display window, a map can be 'grabbed' by the cursor and moved around at will. This seemed to me a superb little touch that many other multimedia programmers would have never even considered. The video/multimedia section too just oozes pure class. There are over 20 video shorts to watch (in any of three different screen sizes) all of which are very well encoded and play back at a more than reasonable frame rate. The icons on the side panel, when clicked, animate beautifully and you can even have the Ten Commandments read out by James Earl Jones (the voice of Darth Vader in the *Star Wars* films) if desired!

Presently, *The Complete Multimedia Bible* is one of the best examples of PC multimedia on the market and if, however unlikely it may seem, you *are* looking for an electronic solution to your religious reading habits, then this product comes very highly recommended.

Recommended!
Paul Mallinson

92%

386 DX PCs

	Processor speed (MHz)	Floppy/hard drive capacity (Mb)	Hard disk cache	Cache RAM	RAM (fitted/max)	Monitor	Ports (Parallel, Serial)	Case types (Slim Desktop, Mini tower, Tower)	Free slots	Free drive bays (3.5)	Free drive bays (5.25)	Price	Supplier	Tel
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Dell System 425	25	1.44, 80			4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D	3/6	0	2/3	£1,009	Dell Cmptr Corp	(01344) 720203
Dell System 433	33	1.44, 80			4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D	3/6	0	2/3	£1,089	Dell Cmptr Corp	(01344) 720203
Elonex PC-425X	25	1.44, 85		64k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D	3/5	0/1	1/2	£1,095	Elonex PLC	(0181) 452 4444
Elnx PC-425XEL	25	1.44, 85		64k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D	3/5	0/1	1/2	£935	Elonex PLC	(0181) 452 4444
ElxPC425XLAN	25				2 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S	0	1	0	£885	Elonex PLC	(0181) 452 4444
ElnxPC433ILAN	33				2 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S	0	1	0	£1,025	Elonex PLC	(0181) 452 4444
Escom 486SX	25	1.44, 170			4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	4	1	2	£1,003	Escom	(01800) 665500
Haval PC433S	33	1.44, 129			4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D	4/6	0/1	3	£1,100	Paragon Technol	(0121) 326 6363
Haval PC433SL	33	1.44, 170		256k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M T	6	0	2/6	£1,115	Paragon Technol	(0121)326 6363
ICL D33/25	25	1.44, 85			4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	4	1	1	£1,295	Tecnology PLC	(01925) 830404
ICL D4/33XG	33	1.44, 120			8 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	4	1	1	£2,095	Tecnology PLC	(01925) 830404
Kamco CAD	33	1.44, 245	VL	256k	8 (32)	17" FST XGA	1P, 2S	D	6	0	1	£2,195	Kamco	(01895) 271919
Kamco Classic	25	1.44, 170		64k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	3	0	1	£1,095	Kamco	(01895) 271919
KmcoClassicWin	25	1.44, 170	VL	256k	4 (32)	15" FST XGA	1P, 2S	D	6	0	1	£1,495	Kamco	(01895) 271919
KamcoKC433LB	25	1.44, 170	VL	256k	4 (32)	14" XGA	1P, 2S	D	6	0	1	£1,095	Kamco	(01895) 271919
Kamco Ultra	25	1.44, 170	VL	256k	8 (32)	15" FST XGA	1P, 2S	D	6	0	1	£1,345	Kamco	(01895) 271919
Kamco Ultra Win	25	1.44, 170	VL	256k	8 (32)	15" FST XGA	1P, 2S	D	6	0	1	£1,675	Kamco	(01895) 271919
MT 8080-33L	33	1.44, 0		64k	4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	5	3	3	£1,399	Memorex Telex	(01734) 441544
Oasis SX	25	1.44, 107		64k	2 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D M T	5	0/1	0/3	£899	Oasis Computers	(01458) 835061
Olivetti PCS 44	25	1.44, 85			4 (20)	14" VGA	1P, 1S	S	2	0	1	£1,049	Olivetti	(0181) 780 8160
Patriot VL	33	1.44, 125	1Mb	256k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D T	4	0	3/4	£1,389	Austin Computers	(01234) 841172
Perfecta 25	25	1.44, 105		64k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M	2/5	0	1/2	£895	Watford Elctrncs	(01582) 487777
PS 486SX	25	1.44, 85		128k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S M D T	3/6	1/2	2/3	£799	Power Systems	(01452) 831357
Reeves SX25	25	1.44, 120			4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M	4	0	1	£849	Reeves	(01604) 671277
Reeves SX33	33	1.44, 120			4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M	4	0	1	£949	Reeves	(01604) 671277
SC 486SX25	25	1.44, 105		64k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S	2	0	0	£899	SIR PLC	(01635) 580633
SCB SX	25	1.44, 40		128k	4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	M	4	1	2	£749	SCB Systems	(0181) 298 1114
Trigem 486MM	25	1.44, 42			4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	4	2	1	£1,070	Trigem	(01753) 810808
TulipVisnLineDC	25	1.44, 60			4 (16)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	4	2	1	£1,400	Tulip	(01293) 562323
TulipVisnLineDC	25	1.44, 120			4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	4	2	1	£2,100	Tulip	(01293) 562323
Vale Premier	25	1.44, 120	512k	256k	4 (32)	15" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M T	5	0/1	1/3	£1,349	Evesham Micros	(01386) 765500
Vale Premier Plus	25	1.44, 120	2Mb	256k	8 (32)	15" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M T	5	0/1	1/3	£1,649	Evesham Micros	(01386) 765500
Vale Prestige	25	1.44, 85		128k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M T	5	0/1	1/3	£999	Evesham Micros	(01386) 765500
TFI SX25	25	1.44, 120		256k	4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M T	6	1/2	2/4	£969	Taskforce Tchnlgs	(01753) 620077
Viglen Genie	25	1.44, 120		64k	4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D	2/5	0	1/2	£1,098	Viglen	(0181) 758 7000
Viglen Genie	25	1.44, 200		64k	8 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D	2/5	0	1/2	£1,367	Viglen	(0181) 758 7000
Vtech	25	1.44, 107		128k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	4	1	0	£1,099	Vtech	(01800) 773773
Zeno 486	25	1.44, 80			4 (16)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	2	2	2	£865	Tecnology PLC	(01925) 830404

486 DX PCs

	Processor speed (MHz)	Floppy/hard drive capacity (Mb)	Hard disk cache	Cache RAM	RAM (fitted/max)	Monitor	Ports (Parallel, Serial)	Case types (Slim Desktop, Mini tower, Tower)	Free slots	Free drive bays (3.5)	Free drive bays (5.25)	Price	Supplier	Tel
Akhter LC-33L	33	1.44, 105		128k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D M T	4	0/1	1	£1,326	Akhter Computers	(01279) 443521
Apricot XEN-PC	33	1.44, 160			4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	3	0	1	£1,299	Apricot Computers	(0121) 717 7171
CI Leo	33	1.44, 80		Yes	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	2	1	2	£POA	Centerprise	(01256) 463754
Compusys VESA	33	1.44, 85		256k	4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	4	0	1	£1,399	Compusys	(01296) 395531
Compusys VESA	50	1.44, 85		256k	4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	4	0	1	£1,699	Compusys	(01296) 395531
Dan for Windows	33	1.44, 210	2.5Mb	64k	8 (64)	14" XGA	1P, 2S	D M T	2/5	0/1	1/3	£1,529	Dan Technology	(0181) 902 9922
Dan Wndows Pro	50	1.44, 340	2.5Mb	256k	8 (64)	17" XGA	1P, 2S	D M T	2/5	0/1	1/3	£2,147	Dan Technology	(0181) 902 9922
Dell System433M	33	1.44, 120			4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D	3/6	0	2/3	£1,329	Dell Cmputer Corp	(01344) 720203
Dell System433T	33	1.44, 120			8 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	T	8	0	6	£1,719	Dell Cmputer Corp	(01344) 720203
Elonex PC-433	33	1.44, 85		64k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D	3/5	0/1	1/2	£1,275	Elonex PLC	(0181) 452 4444
Escom 486DX33	33	1.44, 250		64k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	T	4	1	2	£1,360	Escom	(01800) 665500
Haval PC433	33	1.44, 129			4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D	4/6	0/1	3	£1,210	Paragon Technlogy	(0121) 326 6363
Haval PC450L	50	1.44, 129			4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D	4/6	0/1	3	£1,279	Paragon Technlogy	(0121) 326 6363
Haval PC450E	50	1.44, 210	1Mb	1Mb	8 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	T	8	2	4	£2,113	Paragon Technlogy	(0121) 326 6363
ICL D4/33D	33	1.44, 85			4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	4	1	1	£1,655	Tecnology PLC	(01925) 830404
Kamco CAD	50	1.44, 245	VL	256k	8 (32)	17" FST XGA	1P, 2S	D	6	0	1	£2,420	Kamco	(01895) 271919
Kamco Classic	33	1.44, 170		256k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	3	0	1	£1,249	Kamco	(01895) 271919
KmcoClassicWin	33	1.44,170	VL	256k	4 (32)	15" FST XGA	1P, 2S	D	6	0	1	£1,595	Kamco	(01895) 271919
Mesh M486BL	33	1.44, 120			4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	5	0	2	£1,140	Mesh	(0181) 452 1111
Mesh M486CL	50	1.44, 120			4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M	5	1	2	£1,194	Mesh	(0181) 452 1111
MT 8090-33L	33	1.44, 0		64k	4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	5	3	3	£1,605	Memorex Telex	(0734) 441544
"	"	"		256k	8 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	5	3	3	£2,655	Memorex Telex	(0734) 441544
Oasis DX50	50	1.44, 107		256k	4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D M T	4	0/1	0/3	£1,299	Oasis Computers	(01458) 835061
Patriot 486 VL	50	1.44, 125	1Mb	256k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D T	4	0	3/4	£1,629	Austin Computers	(01234) 841172
Perfecta 33	33	1.44, 105		64k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M	2/5	0	1/2	£1,275	Watford Elctrncs	(01582) 487777
Powerplex Vesa	33	1.44, 120	64k	256k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M T	4	1	2	£1,349	Multiplex Cmpters	(0171) 498 5252
PS 486/50	50	1.44, 210		64k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D M T	3/6	1/2	2/3	£1,179	Power Systems	(01452) 831357
SC 486 DX	33	1.44, 105	512k	128k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S	2	0	0	£1,199	SIR PLC	(01635) 580633
Stealth DX Pro	33	1.44, 120		256k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	4	1	1	£1,149	Multiplex Cmpters	(0171) 498 5252
Technical SL486	25	1.44, 85			4 (16)	14" VGA	1P, 1S	S	2	0	0	£1,054	Tecnology PLC	(01925) 830404
Trigem 486MM	33	1.44, 42			4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	4	2	1	£1,290	Trigem	(01753) 810808
Vale Premier	33	1.44, 120	512k	256k	4 (32)	15" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M T	5	0/1	1/3	£1,519	Evesham Micros	(01386) 765500
Vale Premier Plus	33	1.44, 120	2Mb	256k	8 (32)	15" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M T	5	0/1	1/3	£1,819	Evesham Micros	(01386) 765500
Vale Prestige	33	1.44, 85		128k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M T	5	0/1	1/3	£1,169	Evesham Micros	(01386) 765500
Vanilla 486DX	33	1.44, 85	32k	256k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D M T	1/7	0/2	0/5	£1,269	Vanilla	(0171) 631 5454

486 DX2 PCs

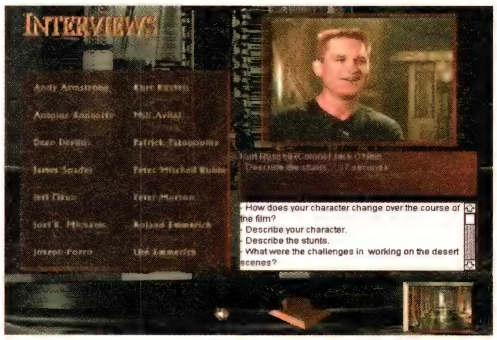
	Processor speed (MHz)	Floppy/hard drive capacity (Mb)	Hard disk cache	Cache RAM	RAM (fitted/max)	Monitor	Ports (Parallel, Serial)	Case types (Slim, Desktop, Mini tower, Tower)	Free slots	Free drive bays (3.5")	Free drive bays (5.25")	Price	Supplier	Tel
Akhter 50L	50	1.44, 105		128k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D M T	4	0/1	1/3	£1,469	Akhter Computers	(01279) 443521
Akhter 66 L	66	1.44, 105		128k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D M T	4	0/1	1/3	£1,570	Akhter Computers	(01279) 443521
CI Leo	66	1.44, 80		Yes	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	2	1	2	£POA	Centerprise	(01256) 463754
Compaq Prolinea	66	1.44, 120			4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S	4	1	0	£2,231	Compaq	(0181) 332 3000
Compusys VESA	66	1.44, 85		256k	4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	4	0	1	£1,799	Compusys	(01296) 395531
Dan for Windows	66	1.44, 210	2.5Mb	256k	8 (64)	14" XGA	1P, 2S	D M T	2/5	0/1	1/3	£1,758	Dan Technology	(0181) 902 9922
Dantium 66 EISA	66	1.44, 210			4 (384)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	6	0	1	£2,188	Dan Technology	(0181) 902 9922
Dell System450M	50	1.44, 210			4 l(64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D	3/6	0	2/3	£1,429	Dell Cmputer Corp	(01344) 720203
Dell System450T	50	1.44, 210			8 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	T	8	0	6	£1,819	Dell Cmputer Corp	(01344) 720203
Elonex PC-450	50	1.44, 85		64k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D	3/5	0/1	1/2	£1,595	Elonex PLC	(0181) 452 4444
ElnexPC466LAN	66				2 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S	0	1	0	£1,350	Elonex PLC	(0181) 452 4444
Escom 486 DX2	66	1.44, 340			8 (64)	15" SVGA	1P, 2S	T	5	0	3	£1,616	Escom	(01800) 665500
Haval PC462L	66	1.44, 170			4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D	4/6	0/1	3	£1,430	Paragon Technlogy	(0121) 326 6363
Haval PC466E	66	1.44, 210	1Mb	1Mb	8 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	T	8	2	4	£2,187	Paragon Technlogy	(0121) 326 6363
KamcoKC433LB	50	1.44, 170	VL	256k	4 (32)	14" XGA	1P, 2S	D	6	0	1	£1,370	Kamco	(01895) 271919
Mesh M486DI	66	1.44, 120			4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M T	5	0	7	£1,352	Mesh	(0181) 452 1111
MT 8092-66L	66	1.44, 0		64k	4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	5	3	3	£1,805	Memorex Telex	(01734) 441544
Oasis DX2	66	1.44, 107		256k	4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S D M T	4	0/1	0/3	£1,399	Oasis Computers	(01458) 835061
Perfecta 50	50	1.44, 105		64k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M	2/5	0	1/2	£1,299	Watford Elctrncs	(01582) 487777
PwrplxVesa50C	50	1.44, 120	64k	256k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M T	4	1	2	£1,499	Multiplex Cmpters	(0171)-498 5252
PwrplxVesa66C	66	1.44, 120	64k	256k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M T	4	1	2	£1,549	Multiplex Cmpters	(071) 498 5252
Power IV	66	1.44, 270		512k	8 (16)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	M	4	1	2	£999	Bits and PCs	(01344) 776050
Power V	90	1.44, 540		512k	8 (16)	15" SVGA	1P, 2S	M	4	1	2	£1,599	Bits and PCs	(01344) 776050
Reeves DX2	66	1.44, 120			8 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M	4	0	1	£1,695	Reeves	(01604) 671277
SC 486DX2	50	1.44, 105	512k	256k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	S	2	0	0	£1,299	SIR PLC	(01635) 580633
SCB DX2	66	1.44, 120		128k	4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	M	4	1	2	£1,399	SCB Systems	(0181) 298 1114
Stealth 66 Pro	66	1.44, 120		256k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	4	1	1	£1,349	Multiplex Cmpters	(071) 498 5252
Trigem 486MM	50	1.44, 42			4 (64)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	4	2	1	£1,650	Trigem	(01753) 810808
Vale Premier	66	1.44, 120	512k	256k	4 (32)	15" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M T	5	0/1	1/3	£1,739	Evesham Micros	(01386) 765500
Vale Premier Plus	66	1.44, 120	2Mb	256k	8 (32)	15" SVGA	1P, 2S	D M T	5	0/1	1/3	£2,037	Evesham Micros	(01386) 765500
Vanilla 486DX	66	1.44, 85	32k	256k	4 (32)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	D	1/7	0/2	0/5	£1,649	Vanilla	(0171) 631 5454

Pentium PCs

	Processor speed (MHz)	Floppy/hard drive capacity (Mb)	Cache RAM	RAM (fitted/max)	Monitor	Ports (Parallel, Serial)	Free slots	Free drive bays (3.5")	Free drive bays (5.25")	Price	Supplier	Tel
P90 P/CDT	90	1.44, 540	256k	8(128)	15" MPRII	1P, 2S	2/5	1	1	£1,699	MJN	(01282) 777555
P100P/CDT	100	1.44, 540	256k	16(128)	15" MPRII	1P, 2S	3/4	1	1	£2,299	MJN	(01282) 777555
LC586DX-90PCI	90	1.44, 260	256K	8 (128)	Various	1P, 2S	2	3	2		Akhter	(01279) 443521
LC586DX-100PCI	100	1.44, 260	256K	8 (128)	Various	1P, 2S	2	3	2		Akhter	(01279) 443521
Alpha P/90M PCI	90	1.44, 520	256K	4 (128)	15" NI LR	1P, 2S	4	3	2	£1,565	Atomstyle	(0181) 801 1838
Alpha P/66M	66	1.44, 530	256K	4 (128)	15" NI LR	1P, 2S	8	3	2	£1,280	Atomstyle	(0181) 801 1838
Alpha P/90 PCI	90	1.44, 520	256K	4 (128)	14" NI LR	1P, 2S	4	3	2	£1,250	Atomstyle	(0181) 801 1838
Alpha P/66	66	1.44, 520	256K	4 (128)	14" NI LR	1P, 2S	8	3	2	£1,050	Atomstyle	(0181) 801 1838
Panther P60	60	1.44, 420	256K	8 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S				£1,249	Carrera	(0171) 830 0486
Panther P75	75	1.44, 420	256K	8 (128)	14' SVGA	1P, 2S				£1,299	Carrera	(0171) 830 0486
Panther P90	90	1.44, 420	256K	8 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S				£1,459	Carrera	(0171) 830 0486
Panther P100	100	1.44, 420	256K	8 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S				£1,599	Carrera	(0171) 830 0486
Prolinea 4/100 1	100	1.44, 0	256K	8	Various	1P, 2S				£1,249	Compaq	(0181) 332 3000
Prolinea 4/100 200	100	1.44, 200	256K	8	Various	1P, 2S				£1,429	Compaq	(0181) 332 3000
Prolinea 4/100 340	100	1.44, 340	256K	8	Various	1P, 2S				£1,519	Compaq	(0181) 332 3000
Prolinea 4/100 525	100	1.44, 525	256K	8	Various	1P, 2S				£1,589	Compaq	(0181) 332 3000
Pentium P60	60	1.44, 540	256K	8	14" SVGA	1P, 2S				£1,045	Computronics Ltd	(0181) 885 2820
Pentium P66	66	1.44, 540	256K	8	14" SVGA	1P, 2S				£1,069	Computronics Ltd	(0181) 885 2820
Pentium P90	90	1.44, 540	256K	8	14" SVGA	1P, 2S				£1,295	Computronics Ltd	(0181) 885 2820
PC-590M/I	90	1.44, 0	256K	4 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	3	1	0	£1,215	Elonex	(0181) 452 4444
PC-590M/I	90	1.44, 270	256K	4 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	3	1	0	£1,295	Elonex	(0181) 452 4444
PC-590M/I	90	1.44, 420	256K	4 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	3	1	0	£1,325	Elonex	(0181) 452 4444
PC-590M/I	90	1.44, 540	256K	4 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	3	1	0	£1,355	Elonex	(0181) 452 4444
PC-590M/I	90	1.44, 850	256K	4 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	3	1	0	£1,440	Elonex	(0181) 452 4444
PC-590R/I	90	1.44, 0	256K	4 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	3	1	0	£1,255	Elonex	(0181) 452 4444
PC-590R/I	90	1.44, 270	256K	4 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	3	1	0	£1,335	Elonex	(0181) 452 4444
PC-590R/I	90	1.44, 420	256K	4 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	3	1	0	£1,365	Elonex	(0181) 452 4444
PC-590R/I	90	1.44, 540	256K	4 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	3	1	0	£1,395	Elonex	(0181) 452 4444
PC-590R/I	90	1.44, 850	256K	4 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	3	1	0	£1,480	Elonex	(0181) 452 4444
PC-5100R/I	100	1.44, 0	256K	4 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	3	1	0	£1,635	Elonex	(0181) 452 4444
PC-5100R/I	100	1.44, 270	256K	4 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	3	1	0	£1,715	Elonex	(0181) 452 4444
PC-5100R/I	100	1.44, 420	256K	4 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	3	1	0	£1,745	Elonex	(0181) 452 4444
PC-5100R/I	100	1.44, 540	256K	4 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	3	1	0	£1,775	Elonex	(0181) 452 4444
PC-5100R/I	100	1.44, 850	256K	4 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	3	1	0	£1,860	Elonex	(0181) 452 4444
Minstrel P90PCI	90	1.44, 420	256K	8 (768)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	3/2	2/3	2	£1,692	HM Systems plc	(0181) 209 0911
ValueMagic P60 PCI	60	1.44, 850	256K	8 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	3/5	1	0	£1,470	IPC	(01282) 618999
KT PNTM 90/100 PCI	90	1.44, 540	256K	8 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	4/4	2	2	£1,245	KT Computers	(0181) 961 8897
KT PNTM 90/100-X2	90x2	1.44, 540	256K	8 (128)	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	4/4	2	2	£1,995	KT Computers	(0181) 961 8897
Celerria LP 60	60	1.44, 210	256K	8 (136)	various	1P, 2S	3	1	2		Memorex Telex	(01734) 4411544
Celerria P66	66	1.4, 270	256K	8 (128)	various	1P, 2S	3.	1/3	3		Memorex Telex	(01734) 4411544
Celerria P90	90	1.4, 200	256K	8 (128)	various	1P, 2S	7	1/3	3		Memorex Telex	(01734) 4411544
Haval Pentium 566P	66	1.44, 540	256K	8	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	5/3	3	2	£1,305	Paragon Technology	(0121) 326 6363
Haval Pentium 566P	66	1.44, 1Gb	256K	8	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	5/3	3	2	£1,448	Paragon Technology	(0121) 326 6363
Haval Pentium 566P	66	1.44, 2Gb	256K	8	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	5/3	3	2	£2,154	Paragon Technology	(0121) 326 6363
Haval Pentium 566P	66	1.44, 4Gb	256K	8	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	5/3	3	2	£3,060	Paragon Technology	(0121) 326 6363
Haval Pentium 590P	90	1.44, 540	256K	8	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	5/3	3	2	£1,667	Paragon Technology	(0121) 326 6363
Haval Pentium 590P	90	1.44, 1Gb	256K	8	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	5/3	3	2	£1,710	Paragon Technology	(0121) 326 6363
Haval Pentium 590P	90	1.44, 2Gb	256K	8	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	5/3	3	2	£2,416	Paragon Technology	(0121) 326 6363
Haval Pentium 590P	90	1.44, 4Gb	256K	8	14" SVGA	1P, 2S	5/3	3	2	£3,332	Paragon Technology	(0121) 326 6363
TG Pentium90-PCP395	90	1.44, 420	256K	16	14" XGA	1P, 2S				£1,999	Trigem	(01753) 810808
Perfecta P60	60	1.44,	256K	8 (192)	15" MPRII	1P, 2S				£1,349	Watford Electronics	(01582) 487777
Perfecta P66	66	1.44,	256K	8 (192)	15" MPRII	1P, 2S				£1,439	Watford Electronics	(01582) 487777
Perfecta P90	90	1.44, 528	256K	8 (128)	15" MPRII	1P, 2S				£1,699	Watford Electronics	(01582) 487777

Left-Overs Secrets of Stargate

Bastion ● (0171) 490 1323 ● £34.99



The blurb on the box says "The making of an epic adventure film". Now I'm not sure about anyone else, but I wouldn't really call *Stargate* an *epic* – more of a special effects extravaganza with a mixed-up and confusing story. But enough about my thoughts on the film – this CD has more to offer, especially to film fans who know their special effects.

The *Stargate* CD-ROM contains over 40 minutes of film clips, behind-the-scenes and special effects footage, as well as audio extracts from the original score. It also contains almost an hour of video interviews, 466 production stills and 721 storyboards – and that's not forgetting the large amount of written information about many of the characters and others involved in the film. So there's a lot in there – problem is; while everything is great the first time around, I felt less-than-compelled to sit through the countless 'test' clips (complete with their inherent lack of sound) on a second occasion.

What there is is very good. The program begins in the main hall of the Palace. Here you're treated to some wonderfully rendered 3D graphics as you wander from room to room and, of course, topic to topic. There are a number of *Stargate*-related subjects to explore; Movies, People, Storyboards, Art/Stills and Ancient Wisdom, each with more detail contained within. The video interviews are good – choose a person (Kurt Russell for example) and you are then presented with a list of text questions to pose. Ask them that question and the video kicks in with your reply – simple and effective.

The overall package is slick and informative. For film enthusiasts like myself, I'd say that there's a few good hours of solid, information-based entertainment to be had from this CD. For others lacking thirst in such celluloid-related matters, I'd have to say avoid it – especially if you saw the film and didn't really like it.

Paul Mallinson

83%

Left-Overs

PC-Optix Mega Zoom

SpectraVideo • (0181) 902 2211 • £39.99

This is indeed a chunky piece of hardware. Fashioned in three fetching colours, it comes with an array of features such as a sturdy grey square base which clings to the desk with the aid of only a minimal amount of spittle. This is complemented by a cream-coloured grip which fits your hand like a slipper, and the whole ensemble is rounded off with a selection of battleship-grey buttons.

But enough of the aesthetics, how does it perform? Pretty damn good, as it goes. A quick stint on *Descent* revealed its qualities as it proved ideal for those tight corners and swift 180° turns. The PC-Optix is the kind of stick that you find yourself leaning in synchronisation with, and is well suited to fast action games.

The 30 shots per second autofire, four manual fire buttons and adjustable throttle knob also make it perfect for flight simulators. I couldn't actually verify this fact as I would rather eat my own earwax than spend quality time playing a flight simulator.

The PC-Optix comes with its own calibration program (in six languages, no less) and the X-Y axes can be adjusted manually using the mega zoom dials at the front of the base. Depending on what type of game you are playing and the flexibility needed, you can also switch the setting to either digital or analog. In digital mode the stick functions in only eight directions (up, down, left, right and diagonals) whereas in analog it provides complete control.

This is a top stick and should give you the edge in most games. If I have one qualm it is with its brittleness, as was proven when our illustrious editor casually snapped the stem with one flick of his over-muscled wrist.

Steve Hill

80%

Portable PCs

	Case type (Desktop/ Laptop)	Processor	Processor speed	Floppy/hard drive capacity	RAM (fitted/max)	Screen (LCD, Active matrix, Mono, Colour	Ports (Parallel, Serial, PCMIA)	Dimensions (mm)	Wight (kg)	Battery life (hours)	Price	Supplier	Tel
AJP 6500DX	Note	486DX	25	1.44,120	4 (16)	L-C	1P 1S 1PCM	220x280x45	3.2	2	£1,995	AJP	(0181) 452 9090
AJP 6500DX	Note	486DX2	25	1.44,120	4 (16)	AM-C	1P 1S 1PCM	220x280x45	3.2	2	£2,995	AJP	(0181) 452 9090
Elonex NB-425X	Note	486SX	25	1.44,80	4 (32)	L-M	1P 1S 1PCM	285x216x44	2.5	18	£1,445	Elonex PLC	(0181) 452 4444
Elonex NB-450	Note	486DX2	50	1.44,80	4 (32)	L-M	1P 1S 1PCM	285x216x44	2.5	18	£1,910	Elonex PLC	(0181) 452 4444
Elonex NB-466	Note	486DX2	66	1.44,80	4 (32)	L-M	1P 1S 1PCM	285x216x44	2.5	18	£2,010	Elonex PLC	(0181) 452 4444
Freedom 486	Note	486SX	20	1.44,80	2 (8)	L-M	1P 1S	216x280x45	2.4	2.2	£949	Dataplex	(01753) 535557
Grid 4025N	Note	486SL	25	1.44,120	4 (32)	L-M	1P 2S 2PCM	292x215x47	2.7	5	£2,179	Tandy Grid	(0181) 897 6565
MnstrlXPDXCol	Note	486DX	33	1.44,80	4 (20)	AM-C	1P 1S 1PCM	213x297x48	3	3	£2,675	HM Systems PLC	(0181) 209 0911
Minstrel XP DX2	Note	486DX2	66	1.44,80	4 (20)	L-M	1P 1S	213x297x48	3	3	£1,550	HM Systems PLC	(0181) 209 0911
Minstrel XP SX	Note	386SX	25	1.44,80	2 (8)	L-M	1P 1S 1PCM	213x297x48	3	3	£850	HM Systems PLC	(0181) 209 0911
Mitac 3020F	Note	386SLC	25	1.44,80	2 (10)	L-C	1P 1S	280x220x45	2.5	4	£899	Mitac	(01952) 670370
Mitac 4028G	Note	486SLC	25	1.44,80	2 (18)	L-C	1P 1S	280x220x45	2.5	4	£999	Mitac	(01952) 670370
TA Walkstation	Note	386SX	20	1.44,40	2 (8)	L-M	1P 1S	279x210x52.5	3		£619	Evesham Micros	(01386) 765500
Thinkpad 700	Note	486SLC	25	1.44,80	4 (16)	L-M	1P 1S	297x210x48	2.9	3.8	£2,045	IBM UK	(01256) 841848
Toshiba TI850	Note	386SX	25	1.44,80	4 (12)	L-M	1P 2S	300x214x57	3.1	5	£1,375	Toshiba	(01932) 852167
Toshiba TI850C	Note	386SX	25	1.44,80	4 (12)	L-C	1P 2S	300x214x57	3.3	3.5	£1,750	Toshiba	(01932) 852167
Tosh T4400C SX	Note	486SX	25	1.44,80	2 (18)	AM-C	1P 2S 1PCM	297x210x59	3.65	3	£3,595	Toshiba	(01932) 852167
Toshiba T4500	Note	486SX	20	1.44,80	4 (20)	L-M	1P 2S 1PCM	297x210x46	2.9	4.5	£1,195	Toshiba	(01932) 852167
Toshiba T4500C	Note	486SX	20	1.44,80	4 (20)	AM-C	1P 2S 1PCM	297x210x46	3.1	3.5	£3,150	Toshiba	(01932) 852167
Toshiba T6400C	Laptop	486DX2	50	1.44,200	4 (36)	AM-C	1P 2S	390x267x104	5.9	N/A	£5,299	Toshiba	(01932) 852167
Victor 400N	Note	486SLC	25	1.44,80	4 (8)	L-M	1P 2S	216x279x44	2.7		£1,419	Tandy Grid	(0181) 897 6565
Victor 400N/C	Note	486SLC	25	1.44,80	4 (8)	L-M	1P 2S	216x279x44	2.7		£2,179	Tandy Grid	(0181) 897 6565
AJP 3660 P60	Note	P60	60	1.44, 245	8 (40)	L-C	1P 1S	283x262x60	3.7	2	£1,899	AJP	(0181) 452 9090
AJP 3660 P66	Note	P66	66	1.44, 245	8 (40)	L-C	1P 1S	283x262x60	3.7	2	£1,999	AJP	(0181) 452 9090
Minstrel XPeco P90	Note	P90	90	1.44,340	8 (40)	L-C	2P, 1S	279x219x51	3.09	.5	£1,692	Minstrel	(0181) 209 0911
Minstrel P54C	Note	P90	90	1.44,420	8 (768)	L-C	1P, 2S	413x330x180			POA	Minstrel	(0181) 209 0911

Don't forget, you can win a £3,000 Texas Instruments notebook PC in our competition on page 87!

Mono Dot-Matrix Printers

	Number of pins	Paper width	Draft speed (characters per second)	NLQ speed (cps)	Fonts	Tractor type	Auto paper parking	Cut sheet feeder	Parallel/Serial	Warranty	Price	Supplier	Tel
BP 5780	18	16"	520	133	2	Push	*	No	P S	12m OS	£1,599	Seikosha	(01753) 685873
BP 7800	24	16"	520	158	10	Push	*	£245	P S	12m OS	£1,699	Seikosha	(01753) 685873
Brother 1324	24	A4	216	60	7	Push/Pull	*	£99	P S	12m OS	£319	Brother	(0161) 330 6531
Brother 4318	18	A3	800	720	9	Push	*	£289	P S	12m OS	£1,495	Brother	(0161) 330 6531
C-420 XAP	24	11"	216	72	6	Push/Pull	*	£40	P	12m BB	£349	Itochu Electronics	(0181) 946 4960
C-5000	18	15.5"	540	110	3	Push/Pull	*	£250	P S	12m BB	£1,495	Itochu Electronics	(0181) 946 4960
C-515 XBD	24	15.5"	240	80	2	Push	*	£268	P S	12m BB	£268	Itochu Electronics	(0181) 946 4960
Citizen Swift 200	24	A4	180	60	6	Push/Pull	*	£90	P	24m BB	£259	Citizen	(01753) 584111
Citizen Swift 9X	9	A3	160	40	3	Push/Pull	*	£170	P	24m BB	£329	Citizen	(01753) 584111
DP LX 455	33	16"	1,000	350	6	Push/Pull			P S	12m BB	£3,395	Data Products	(01734) 884777
FX 1170	9	A3	342	68	3	Push/Pull	*	£79	P	12m BB	£539	Epson	(01442) 61144
Geniprint 25	24	11"	240	80	5	Push	*	£210	P S	12m OS	£489	Genicom	(01252) 522500
KX-P1123	24	A4	192	63	5	Push/Pull	*	£69	P	12m BB	£240	Panasonic	(01344) 853915
LQ 100	24	A4	200	72	8			Yes	P	12m BB	£245	Epson	(01442) 61144
LQ 570+	24	A4	269	90	14	Push/Pull	*	£49	P	12m BB	£339	Epson	(01442) 61144
LT 20	24	A4	120	50	9	None		No	P	12m BB	£299	Seikosha	(01753) 685873
LX 100	9	A4	240	48	3	Push	*	Yes	P	12m BB	£189	Epson	(01442) 61144
LX 400	9	A4	180	30	3	Pull		£79	P	12m BB	£169	Epson	(01442) 61144
MT 130/24	24	A4	300	150	8	Push	*	£115	P	12m BB	£539	Mannesman Tally	(01734) 788711
MT 131/24	24	A3	300	150	8	Push	*	£120	P	12m BB	£629	Mannesman Tally	(01734) 788711
NEC P62	24	A4	300	150	10	Push/Pull	*	£99	P S	12m BB	£459	NEC	(0181) 993 8111
NEC P72	24	A3	300	150	10	Push/Pull	*	£115	P S	12m BB	£549	NEC	(0181) 993 8111
Oki ML380	24	8"	240	64	4	Push	*	£79	P	12m BB	£329	Oki Systems	(01753) 819819
SL150	24	16"	200	67	9	Push	*	£127	P	12m BB	£349	Seikosha	(01753) 685873
685873SL-92 Plus	24	10"	200	67	9	Push	*	£82	P	12m BB	£280	Seikosha	(01753) 685873
SP 2415	9	16"	200	50	5	Push	*	£127	P S	12m BB	£299	Seikosha	(01753) 685873

Mono Ink-Jet Printers

	Number of pins	Tractor type	Auto paper parking	Cut sheet feeder	Parallel/Serial	Warranty	Price	Supplier	Tel
Breeze 100	P	300	A4	83	53	3	£349	Fujitsu	(0181) 573 4444
Breeze 200	D	300	A4	360	120	3	£500	Fujitsu	(0181) 573 4444
Canon BJ-10SX	P	360	A4	110	110	6	£299	Canon UK	(01800) 252223
Canon BJ-200	D	360	A4	248	173	7	£329	Canon UK	(01800) 252223
Canon BJ-300	D	360	A3	300	150	3	£599	Canon UK	(01800) 252223
Canon BJ-330	D	360	A3	300	150	3	£699	Canon UK	(01800) 252223
Jetmate J800	D	300	A4	160	120	5	£239	NEC	(0181) 993 8111
Jetmate J800	D	300	A4	360	120	9	£369	NEC	(0181) 993 8111
Speeedjet 300	D	300	A4	300	300	3	£359	Seikosha	(01753) 685873
SQ 1170	D	360	A3	660	240	11	£899	Epson	(01442) 61144
SQ 870	D	360	A4	660	240	11	£659	Epson	(01442) 61144

Colour Printers

	Type	Colours	Maximum resolution	Maximum paper size	Draft speed (cps)	High quality speed	Fonts	Continuous paper	Price	Supplier	Tel
Citizen Swift 240C	Dot Matrix	4	24-pin	A4	200	66	9	*	£359	Citizen	(01753) 584111
Citizen Swift 90C	Dot Matrix	4	9-pin	A4	180	45	6	*	£219	Citizen	(01753) 584111
HP Deskjet 550C	Ink-jet	All	300	A4	240	167	5		£459	Hewlett-Packard	(01344) 369222
JX-735	Ink-jet	All	180	A3	120	105		*	£1,295	Sharp	(0161) 205 2333
KX-P2180	Dot Matrix	8	9-pin	A4	192	38	7	*	£270	Panasonic	(01344) 853915
MT 151/9F	Dot Matrix	4	9-pin	A3	300	75	4	*	£589	Mannesman Tally	(01734) 788711
P72	Dot Matrix	8	24-pin	A3	300	150	10	*	£608	NEC	(0181) 993 8111
P72	Dot Matrix	8	24-pin	A3	400	200	10	*	£799	NEC	(0181) 993 8111

Laser Printers

	PCL/ Postscript	Speed (pages per minute)	Maximum resolution	RAM (fitted/max)	Fonts	Maximum paper size	Tray capacity	Number of trays	Toner cartridge life (pages)	Price	Supplier	Tel
Canon LBP-4lite	Other	4	300	0.5 (2.5)	13	A4	70	1	3,500	£899	Canon UK	(01800) 252223
Canon LBP-4plus	Other	4	300	1.5 (2.5)	13	A4	70	1	3,500	£1,175	Canon UK	(01800) 252223
Canon LBP-8 IV	Other	8	600	2 (10)	25	A4	250	2	2,600	£1,699	Canon UK	(01800) 252223
EPL 5000	PCL4	6	300	0.5 (6.5)	28	Legal	250	1	6,000	£745	Epson	(01442) 61144
EPL5200	PCL4	6	300	1 (5)	28	Legal	250	1	6,000	£929	Epson	(01442) 61144
HP Laserjet 4L	PCL5	4	300	1 (2)	26	A4	100	1	3,000	£649	Hewlett-Packard	(01344) 369222
HP Laserjet 4M	PCL5/PS	8	600	6 (26)	45+35	Legal	100	2	6,000	£1,949	Hewlett-Packard	(01344) 369222
HP Laserjet 111P	PCL5	4	300	1 (5)	22	Legal	70	1	3,500	£809	Hewlett-Packard	(01344) 369222
JX-9500 H	Other	9	300	0.5 (4.5)	6	A4	250	1	3,000	£895	Sharp Electronics	(0161) 205 2333
JX-9600	PCL5	8	600	1 (9)	27	A4	500	2	15,000	£1,159	Hewlett-Packard	(01344) 369222
Kyocera F-800T	PCL4	8	300	0.5 (4.5)	79	A4	150	1	4,000	£999	Kyocera	(01734) 311500
Oce 6121	PCL4	8	300	0.5 (4)	8	A4	200	1	3,000	£940	Oce Systems	(0181) 502 0038
Oce 6122	PCL4/PS	8	300	1.5 (4.5)	35	A4	200	1	3,000	£1,630	Oce Systems	(0181) 502 0038
Oce 6123	PCL4/PS	8	300	4.5 (8)	35	A4	200	1	3,000	£1,865	Oce Systems	(0181) 502 0038

Scanners

	Flatbed/ Handheld	Colours	Grey scales	Max resolution	Maximum Scan areas	Software	Price	Supplier	Tel
Col Handy Scanner	H	262K	64	200	A4	FotoTone	£299	Evesham Micros	(01386) 765500
GT65-PCPL	F	16.7M	256	1200	A4	Picture Publisher LE	£875	Epson	(01442) 61144
HP Scanjet 111P	F	0	256	300	A4	Deskscan/PhotoFinish	£795	Hewlett-Packard	(01344) 369369
JX-100	H	262K	64	200	3.9"x6.3"	Windows Scan 100	£495	Sharp Electronics	(0161) 205 2333
JX-320	F	16.7M	256	600	A4	Photoshop/styler	£1,495	Sharp Electronics	(0161) 205 2333
Naksha Hand Scan	H	0	0	3	4"		£40	Naksha	(01925) 56398
SB-L301	F		16	300	Legal		£1,195	Pentax	(0181) 864 4422
Scanman 256	H	0	256	400	10.5cm	FotoTouch	£279	Logitech	(01344) 891313
Scanman 32-DOS	H	0	32	400	10.5cm	GreyTouch	£109	Logitech	(01344) 891313
Scanman 32-Win	H	0	32	400	10.5cm	FotoTouch	£159	Logitech	(01344) 891313
Scanman Colour	H	16.7M	256	400	10.5cm	Fototouch Colour	£449	Logitech	(01344) 891313

Miscellaneous

	Type	Description	Price	Supplier	Tel
Multimedia Discovery Kit	Multimedia	MPC standard multimedia upgrade kit	£500	Westpoint Creative	(01743) 248590
Multimedia Professional Kit	Multimedia	MPC standard multimedia upgrade kit	£600	Westpoint Creative	(01743) 248590
Multimedia Starter Kit	Multimedia	MPC standard multimedia upgrade kit	£450	Westpoint Creative	(01743) 248590
Naksha Mouse	Pointer	3-button serial mouse	£49	Naksha	(01925) 56398
Paradise Graph Accelerator	Graph Card	Accelerated SVGA graphics card	£90	Western Digital	(01372) 360055
Prolmage 1000	Graph Card	Accelerated SVGA graphics card	£99	Opti Technology	(0181) 559 1137
Sonix Sostenuto	Port	High speed serial port for fast modems	£195	Sonix	(01285) 641651
SoundBlaster	Sound Card	8-bit sound card	£89	Westpoint Creative	(01743) 248590
SoundBlaster Pro	Sound Card	16-bit sound card	£129	Westpoint Creative	(01743) 248590
Sprinter 2 Graph Accelerator	Graph Card	Accelerated SVGA graphics card	£195	Surtech	(01256) 51221
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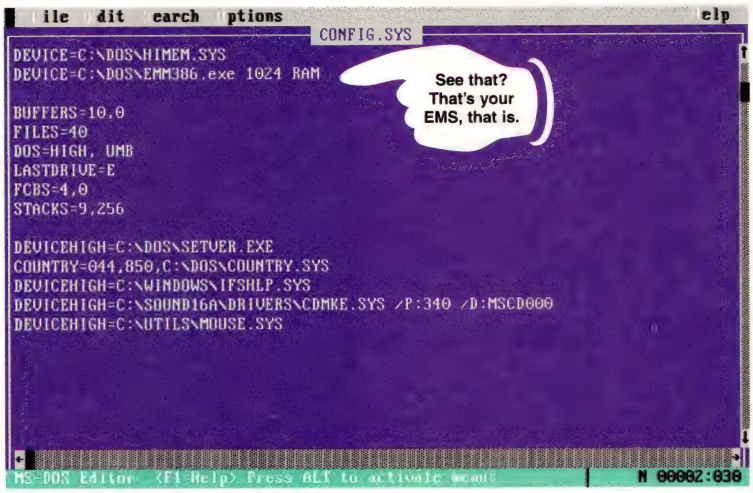
JON'LL FIX IT

This is the section of the magazine where I, Jon Pyle, will attempt to solve the mysteries of your PC. Basically if you have any trouble getting things to load, memory restrictions or something that may look like a wrongly deleted file or virus, get your letters in to me now and I'll find a solution for you next month.

All you have to do is write to me at *Jon'll Fix It, PC Power, Durham House, 124 Old Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 1NF.* Describe the fault and I will do my best to find a solution. If you have problems with DOS, send in your **AUTOEXEC.BAT** and **CONFIG.SYS** files, and if you have problems with Windows, then send all the **.INI** files from your Windows directory as well. Always send as much information about the error itself as you can (error messages, a description of your system's strange behaviour, anything that might help), and your system's specification.



What the hell is EMS?

By far the most common queries we've had at PC POWER concern memory, and in particular, many of you have reported trouble running games which complain about the lack of, or presence of EMS memory. This can normally be rectified by choosing the 'make a boot disk' option from the game's installation screen, but if this is not supported by the installation it is sometimes necessary to modify your machine's memory configuration by hand.

EMS memory is made available by a command called **EMM386.EXE** which appears in the **CONFIG.SYS** file. This command appears as **DEVICE=C:\DOS\EMM386.EXE <NUMBER> <RAM or NOEMS>**. The **<RAM or NOEMS>** section describes which type of memory to make available, while **<NUMBER>** denotes the amount of memory to set aside. If the program you are trying to run reports "No EMS memory" or words to that effect, then the **RAM** option should be used, meaning that the line in your **CONFIG.SYS** should now read:

DEVICE=C:\DOS\EMM386.EXE RAM.

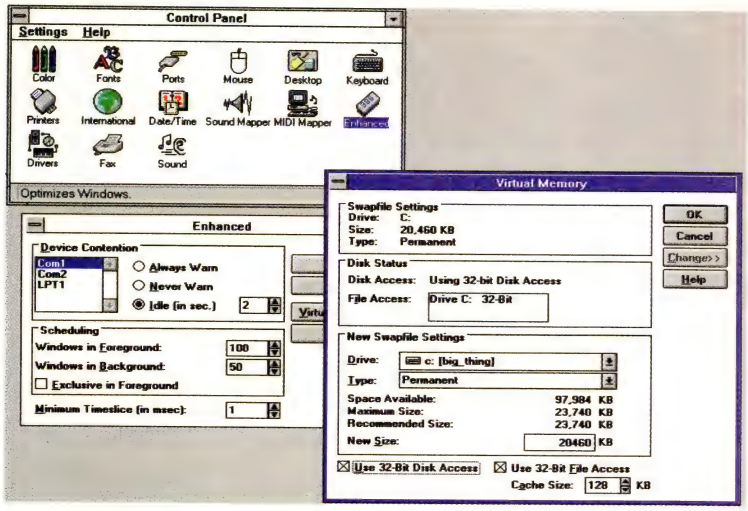
If the software complains about the amount of free EMS (eg "Not enough free EMS"), then the **<NUMBER>** option should be added/changed depending on how much memory the program requires. This will usually be reported along with the error message such as "1,024K EMS required." If it is not, then consult the manual for the game's EMS requirements.

Once you know how much EMS you need (in this example 1,024K), amend the **EMM386**

JON'S DISK HOTLINE

If you have a problem with your COVERDISK ONLY, call Jon now on his very own hotline number, open 4-5.30pm weekdays (not weekends, please. This is NOT a general helpline). Pick up the phone now and Jon will fix it for you! The number to call is:

(01202) 299900, ext 41



line in your **CONFIG.SYS** to read:

DEVICE=C:\DOS\EMM386.EXE 1024 RAM.

Note that when your machine is rebooted it will display a message "Size of expanded memory pool adjusted" and ask you to press any key. It is not recommended that you leave your computer's memory configured in this way though, as it will stop some programs from having full access to your machine's memory. So always make a note of the original EMS settings and return them to normal after playing the game. Hope that helps a few people.

CMOS Conundrum

I recently replaced the hard disk in my machine for a larger model. The new disk works well and all my software is fine, but when I switch my machine on, the message "CMOS not set – press F1 to resume" appears. While this does not appear to effect the machine in any other way, I would like the problem fixed, can you help?
S Williams, Brighton.

Jon says: The trouble you are having is caused by the loss of a small amount of configuration data stored in an area called the **CMOS**. This can be reset via a small configuration program which allows you to select the type of peripherals connected to your machine.

This **BIOS Set-up** program can only be accessed when the machine is starting up. To enter it, reset your machine, then press the DEL key while the memory test is running (You will see a number counting upwards as the memory is tested).

After a short pause, you should be greeted by the **BIOS Set-up** program. One of the options available is marked "**Save CMOS and exit**." Select this option. Your machine will now reboot and the settings will be saved, ending any more of those annoying messages.

Steaming Windows

I had been using Windows 3.11 on my 486-33 for some time when I encountered a friend's 486 which ran the program much faster. He said that this was due to 32-bit files which could be selected from the Control Panel. Having found this option hidden behind a button marked **Virtual Memory**, I managed to select "32-bit file access", but this did not speed up Windows at all. Now when I enter the Control Panel, a message appears saying "32-bit file access was unable to run." Can you help?
A Walton, Doncaster

Jon says: To use any kind of 32-bit access in Windows, a driver file must be added to your **CONFIG.SYS**. This file is located in your Windows directory and can be added to your configuration by typing **EDIT \CONFIG.SYS** at the DOS prompt. When the editor opens, go to the bottom of the file and enter the line:

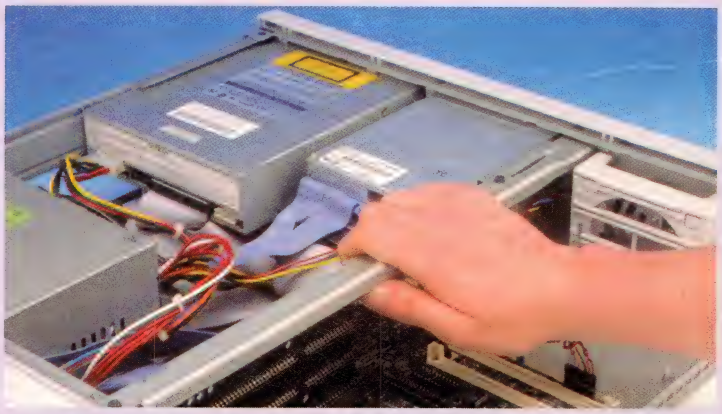
DEVICEHIGH=C:\WINDOWS\IFSHLP.SYS

Now reboot your machine, enter the Control Panel, Enhanced section and select **Virtual Memory**. Now select the 32-bit file access and restart Windows. You should experience a marked increase in speed while running your Windows applications.

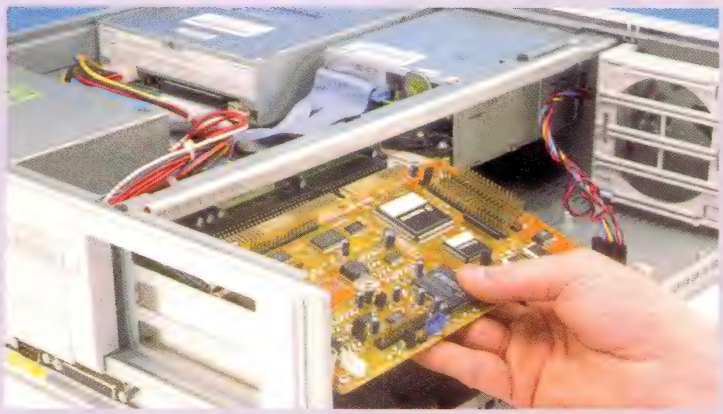
INSTALLING A SOUND CARD

What with our extensive sound feature this issue, we thought you'd like to have this handy cut out 'n keep four step guide to fitting a sound card. Brian Cant eat your heartt out!

Locate the case screws. These will be found either on the rear panel of the machine or on the sides, depending on your computer's case design. Once you've found the screws, remove them carefully.



Remove the case from your machine, but be patient. Under no circumstances should you use force. Once the machine is open, grasp the metal chassis for a few seconds to disperse any static electricity from your body.



Now take your sound card out of its anti-static envelope and take a good look at it. Note the arrangement of the copper connectors at the base, then find a slot which matches these and gently but firmly push the card home.

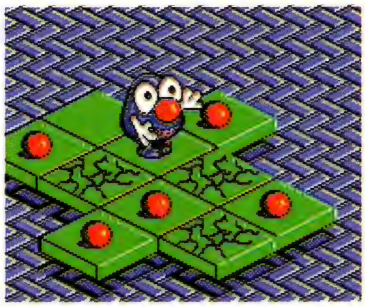
Check that the card's connectors are well fitted, then replace the cover on your machine. Now find the speaker socket on the back of your sound card. It's usually marked 'SPKR', 'LINE OUT' or 'HEADPHONE'. Plug your speakers in here.

Budget Games

There's a spring-cleaning spree on at the moment, with 95% of the packages this month having no less than six games on them. So with the software houses virtually giving them away, Keith Pullin investigates over 100 titles and finds out if they're worth it. The best game of the month gets the coveted Budget Blockbuster award, and that's far better than a *Swap Shop* pen!

Five Plus One Collection

This series of 20 CDs, priced at £7.99, comes with the catchy slogan 'Six ORIGINAL games on the PC CD-ROM'. I'm not too sure about original, but here's a brief run-down of each CD from Prism Leisure available from most electrical retailers. If you want to contact Prism Leisure, ring (0181) 8895559.



1 BOMBUZAL
Classic isometric puzzle action that is similar to *Q-Bert*; ideal for puzzle enthusiasts. Comes with: *Commander Keen, Space Chase, Billy the Kid, Sandstorm, Hero's Heart.*
Overall 74%

2 FOOTBALL MANAGER 2
Sad management game that's nowhere near the quality of the first. Comes with: *Commander Keen 4, Animal Quest, Night Raid, Ball Game 2, Shadow Nights.*
Overall 43%

3 THE THREE STOOGES
Ridiculous stooge antics with some iffy sub games. Comes with: *Wild West Skunny, Corncob 3D, Commander Keen 6, Brix, Ground War.*
Overall 29%

4 IT CAME FROM THE DESERT
Weird B-movie-type script involving giant mutant ants; interesting adventure though, not bad. Comes with: *Cyberchess, Dark Ages, Quickfire, Keen Dreams, Catch.*
Overall 68%

5 HARDBALL
Sloppy baseball game, with minimal playability. Comes with: *Duke Nukem, Bio Menace, Raptor, Capture the Flag, Jelly Bean.*
Overall 54%

6 SINBAD AND THE THRONE OF THE FALCON
This is eight years old and it shows! Comes with: *Duke Nukem 2, Gateworld, Jetpack, Aquanoid, Galleons.*
Overall 25%

7 TV SPORTS BASKETBALL
Pretty good basketball sim for its age. Comes with: *Electrobody, Psionics, Secret Agent, Gemstones, Executioner.*
Overall 70%

8 MILLEMIGLIA
Tosh Italian driving game. Comes with: *Captured by Pirates, Shooting Gallery, Ancient Deathwatch, Isle Wars, Fairy Godmother.*
Overall 33%

9 SUPREMACY
Still one of the best strategy games on any format. Comes with: *True Blood, Desert Raid, Mah Jongg, F.B.I. Fred, Balloon 2.*
Overall 84%

10 THE BLUES BROTHERS
Platform game that hardly does the legendary duo justice. Comes with: *Bodycount, Zone 66, Save our Pizzas, Dangerous Dave, Casino Slots.*
Overall 61%

11 CRAZY CARS 3
Two year old *Outrun* clone that still possesses a certain flair. Comes with: *Gods of Thunder, Sky Roads, Catacomb Abyss, Hugo 2: Who Dunnit, Fallout.*
Overall 78%

12 GHOSTBUSTERS 2
Spooky mix of game styles, but is a little bland. Comes with: *Back to the Forest, Electroman, Christmas Jetpack, Hugo 3: Jungle of Doom, Bip Bop 2.*
Overall 67%

13 TITUS THE FOX
Annoying platform game that was one of the first releases from Titus. Comes with: *Ken's Labyrinth, Solar Winds, Elfland, Crystal Caves, Starmines 2.*
Overall 56%

14 INTERNATIONAL ATHLETICS
Oh dear, Linford Christie this is not! Definitely fell in the water. Comes with: *Halloween Harry, Heartlight, Kiloblaster, Chinese Checkers, Space Miner.*
Overall 40%

15 F-14 TOMCAT
Dated flight simulation, jerky, slow and graphically dull. Comes with: *Epic Baseball, Lost in space, Major Stryker, Bananoid, Starfire.*
Overall 71%

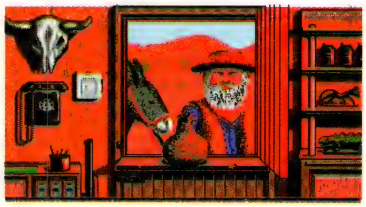
16 MEAN 18
Only slightly worse than *Nick Faldo's Golf*, but still shocking! Comes with: *Epic Pinball, Xypher, Captain Comic, Space Blaster, Zentris.*
Overall 40%

17 ROCKET RANGER
Acclaimed shoot-'em-up in its day, only above average now. Comes with: *The Green, Dare to Dream, Battle of Distant Planets, World Empire 2, Mah Jongg 2.*
Overall 73%

18 3D WORLD BOXING
Good solid thumper. Get this if you're into boxing games. Comes with: *Jill, 3 Point Basketball, Invasion of the Mutant Space Bats, Cosmic Adventure, Floatris.*
Overall 80%

19 TV SPORTS FOOTBALL
Doesn't look much compared to *3DO Madden*, but it's all right. Comes with: *Ranger Fox, Monster Bash, Onesimus, Turoid, Peristroika.*
Overall 75%

20 3D WORLD TENNIS
Sad graphics, but challenging opponents. Comes with: *Traffic Dep. 2192, Xerix, Championship Asteroids, Dinosaur Agency, Penthouse Puzzle.*
Overall 76%



Special Forces

Prism Leisure • £12.99 • CD

SAS veterans, or those wishing to pursue a career with the army, will lap up this overhead mix of strategy and action.

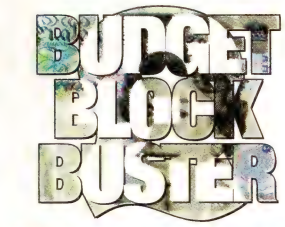
The copy protection is a bit awkward to get the hang of. The page number it asks you to cross reference at the beginning has nothing to do with the one you actually need. You soon get used to it though.

Basically, *Special Forces* is *Commando* with separate missions. You must select four warriors from a band of ten and then equip these hardened nutters with guns, machine guns, medical kits and other pieces of equipment that will ensure your safety in four harsh environments including the desert, Arctic and jungle.

The list of missions includes rescuing the American President from terrorists and destroying huge stashes of guerrilla weaponry. As you progress through the game the missions becomes harder and your squad eventually build up a nice collection of medals and some will even get promoted if they are particularly heroic.

Great for fans of shoot-'em-ups who like a bit of thinking thrown in.

Overall 86%



ISHAR 2: MESSENGERS OF DOOM

Daze Marketing: £12.99 CD-ROM

The sequel to *Ishar* is more of the same – and you can even port over the same characters from the original.

This is a 3-D RPG that uses a *Dungeon Master* type engine rather than the newer, better *Doom* engine. You guide four characters (seems to be the magic number) around the mystical land of Ishar which after the horrors of the previous game, has settled down into a prosperous country.

But while the King was supping his morning coffee one day, a surprise visitor foretold of new evils that were about to befall the land. Somewhat worried, he calls upon your expert band of adventurers to pursue this source of evil and once again save the land.

The gruesome skeletons, mercenaries and other creatures that stalk the land are animated with little imagination. The damage you take seems to come

from a twitch of the arm instead of the lunging blow that you would expect.

The changes from day to night are spectacular and beautiful to look at, but the ropy engine and generally iffy combat leaves it firmly in the average bracket.

Overall 69%

JURASSIC PARK

Hit Squad: £14.99 HD

The game of the film was considered pretty good when released a couple of years ago. *Jurassic Park* was a distinct mix of *Chaos Engine* overhead blasting, and atmospheric 3-D exploring deep in the dinosaur infested visitors centre, utility sheds and all the other places featured in the film.

All the dinosaurs you know and love are there, running around spitting, burping, biting and doing all the other anti-social things that they excel at. To stop this shocking behaviour from the slimy green beasts you have a wide selection of guns to turn to and by crikey you need them, the sheer number of dinos is at times overwhelming.

The 3-D engine that sees you scurrying around the passageways of the compound is effective and gives a good impression of being there, especially

when you hear footsteps approaching and are greeted with a grinning raptor head as you turn the corner. It's a bit slow though and definitely looks dated compared to today's equivalents.

JP is challenging and covers a massive play area. One to consider.

Overall 82%

F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II +50

Prism Leisure: £12.99

This comes free with the *Operation Desert Storm Scenarios* and allows you to fly in six more campaigns, day or night. There are also four difficulty levels and incredible views for you to marvel at. The graphics are dated though, with basic filled polygons slowly chugging their way through the sky – hardly Mach 2 stuff. Comes with 50 other games of varying quality.

Overall 79%

KNIGHTS OF THE SKY +50

Prism Leisure: £12.99

These flying adventures are based on the exploits of WWI biplane pilots. Flying over the cool air above Flanders, the dog fighting based missions are hard to get the hang of, yet ultimately exciting. Not in the class of *Wings of Glory*, but good at the price.

Overall 77%

SILENT SERVICE II +50

Prism Leisure: £12.99

Cruise the depths of the ocean and master the controls of a submarine as you attack German warships and U-boats. With a much more involving campaign than the original, this will engross naval buffs. But nobody else will be interested and it doesn't have the wide appeal of last month's *Task Force*.

Overall 63%

F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER +50

Prism Leisure: £12.99

One of the classic flight simulations. Control the highly elusive F-19 as you embark on a variety of missions. As an old game, the graphics once again are not up to much and are not particularly quick, but it does have loads of missions with medals and promotions.

Overall 81%

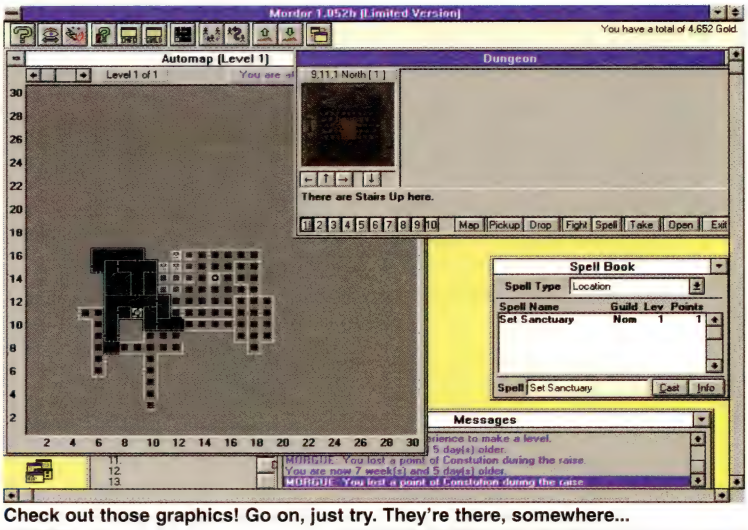
BUDGET TOP TEN

1 (-)	Cartoon Maker	Gametek
2 (-)	Winter Olympics	US Gold
3 (-)	Archer Maclean's Pool	Hit Squad
4 (1)	Bram Stoker's Dracula	Psygnosis
5 (-)	Soccer Kid	Krisalis
6 (-)	Theatre of Death	Psygnosis
7 (6)	Armourgeddon	Psygnosis
8 (-)	Mortal Kombat	Virgin
9 (-)	Descent Demo Disk	Interplay
10 (4)	Hired Guns	Psygnosis

Chart provided by Gallup.

The Public Eye

Jon Pyle performs strange and unspeakable acts with his trusty modem and selection of Jiffy bags to bring you all the latest in the weird world of shareware...



Check out those graphics! Go on, just try. They're there, somewhere...

MORDOR

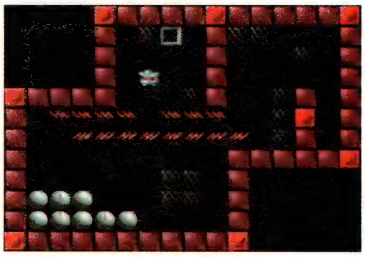
Mordor, as the Tolkien-inspired title might suggest, is a role-playing game à la Dungeons and Dragons. Although there are already many of these games available for the PC, *Mordor* is the first to attempt such an environment under Windows. The screen is filled with information windows which contain your current health, level, possessions, party members, spells, money, and a whole host of other features.

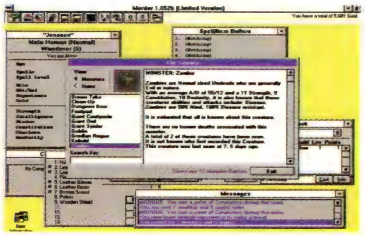
The game centres around a small town which provides the many services an adventurer will require, namely the general store, the guild, the seer, the bank, the inevitable dungeon, and the unavoidable morgue.

Before an adventurer can really get to grips with the dungeons, he must first equip himself in the general store. A quick visit to the local guild library will give you a good idea of what adversaries you can expect to meet in the dungeons. The library shows a small picture of the creature in question, accompanied by a paragraph of text which the program has generated from your encounters with the game's monsters so far.

The first-person-perspective view on the main display leaves much to be desired. On an 800x600 display it covers only 1" square, making the graphics almost redundant and a lively imagination a prerequisite.

Rating : 70%





TRUGG

From the depths of the home computer industry comes the return of the mud-rocks-and-diamonds-game. First released as *BoulderDash* on the old Commodore 64 machines, this classic arcade-puzzle game has appeared on just about every computer since.

Trugg is a robot who must collect spinning tokens from inside mud-filled chambers by simply running over them. The trouble is that he must first tunnel through the mud to get to them, sometimes dislodging boulders or explosives from above him.

The game has its own simple brand of physics, whereby one boulder perched atop another will fall off to either side, and if one of the spinning tokens is hit by a boulder, it will explode. The game combines these very simple rules into increasingly fiendish puzzles.

Remember Rockford? We do.

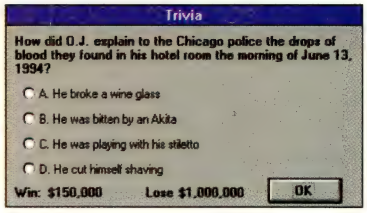
The shareware demo of the game contains only one world, with the other levels available in the registered version. The shareware world is still well worth playing and gives plenty of insight into what will come later.

If you are a fan of the older adaptations of this game, then do not miss this product, likewise if you get your kicks from puzzle games like Tetris, then this game will suit you. If, however, you've just hung up your Super NES *Street Fighter II* cartridge to concentrate on the PC, then you are unlikely to be impressed by its simplistic design.

Rating : 80%

OJ SIMPSON'S ALL-AMERICAN RACE FOR ACQUITTAL

The murder trial of OJ Simpson has caused more than a little media interest across America, but you need no longer just sit and watch the trials on TV, now you can run for your freedom with *OJ Simpson's All-American Race for Acquittal*. This Monopoly-style board game takes you through a hilarious travesty of American justice. Up to four OJs can play by rolling the dice and moving their counter around the board.



The game follows the simplest board game type available and has little long term appeal, but it is more than funny enough to warrant a few hours play. OJs can prove their innocence by picking up evidence cards, thereby convincing a few more jurors of your innocence, or if you are less lucky, you may lose all your money to alimony payments, the tax man or blackmail.

This game is far more entertaining than the sick media circus that has arisen around this case, not least because it does not claim to represent real events.

Rating :70%

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Power Test

3-D Shoot-'em-ups

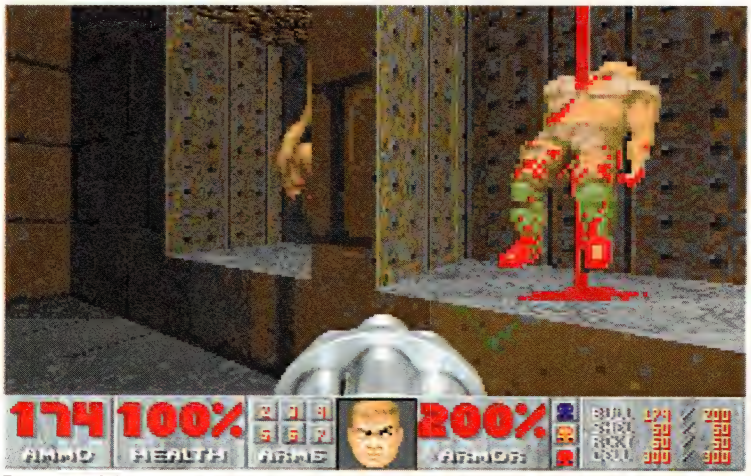
Paul Mallinson shoots up with the best of the 3-D gore-fests.

If one particular genre has exploded, mutated and advanced technologically over the past year or two – it's got to be the 3-D shoot-'em-up. Ever since the ripples caused by iD's *Wolfenstein 3D* and Crystal Dynamics' *Ultima Underworld* series, 3-D shooters have spiralled ever upwards through *Doom*, *Doom II*, *Dark Forces* and beyond. Speed and detail levels have rocketed, resulting in a genre that takes the PC closer to virtual reality than any other type of software. With new examples being released every month, it will be interesting to see how these games develop. As we speak, iD Software are beavering away on their latest project, *Quake*.

One thing to note about this particular genre is just how incestuous the programming fraternity can be. Everybody seems to licensing a 3-D engine from someone or other, developing their own graphics, puzzles and 3-D models before releasing it under their own label. I'm being too harsh here, but you know what I mean. Also, with the introduction of a number of *Doom* editors, anyone is now able to create their own 3-D shoot'-em-up if the effort is put in. Now what did I say about a genre explosion?

Doom II

What can be said about this game that hasn't already been said? A better pedigree you couldn't hope to find – iD Software first blew the lid off the 3-D shoot-'em-up when the original *Doom* first came out, and *Doom II* refines almost every aspect of the original. First and foremost, *Doom II*'s 3-D engine, coded by the ubiquitous iD Software, is of unparalleled quality in terms of speed, smoothness and realism. Of equal stature is the wonderful atmosphere created by the sound and lighting effects – ask anyone who's played the game in any depth and they will tell you how tense and exciting the whole thing can be. Unlike the original *Doom*, *Doom II* is very, very challenging. There are 30 levels to fight your way through, later levels being incredibly difficult unless you approach them with some sort of strategy in mind. The only down side to *Doom II* is the rather feeble music. Aside from this, the game is almost faultless. Oh, and one other thing; if anyone tells you that this game is just a re-hash of the original *Doom*, ignore them – it's far, far better.



Revenge of the mutant splat gore monsters! Die screaming with sharp things in your head! And other Doomy stuff!

iD Software/Virgin
£44.99
Minimum system: 386DX, 4Mb RAM, VGA, hard drive
Supports all major sound cards, mouse, joystick

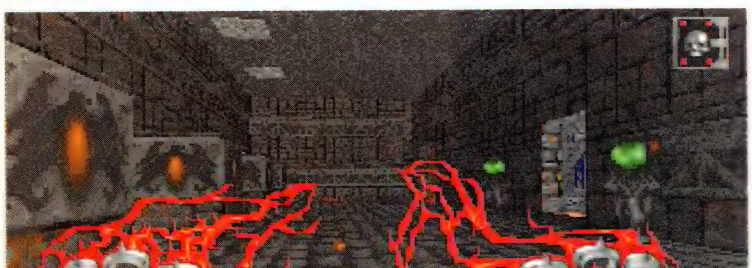
Dark Forces

"Like, wow – I get to shoot Stormtroopers, just like in the movies!" will probably be your first impression upon playing this game, and quite rightly so! *Dark Forces* has been a long time coming – if ever a game promised so much, then this is it. As a Rebel infiltrator you get to swan around impressive Imperial structures, blasting the 'troopers and running from their gruesome pets (well, *I've* never seen those creatures in any *Star Wars* films). The ability to look up and down (thus giving you the opportunity to snipe from high platforms, or vice versa) is a welcome addition, although this does tend to slow the action down as you fumble to 'right' your view under heavy attack. The levels are superbly constructed; there are lifts leading to sub-levels and puzzles that lead you into all kinds of hair-raising situations. Despite a slight lack of atmosphere, *Dark Forces* is a great game and the profusion of excellent little touches once again do justice to the unblemished LucasArts name.

LucasArts/Virgin
£49.99
Minimum system: 486DX 33, 8Mb RAM, VGA, CD-ROM drive
Supports all major sound cards, mouse, joystick

Look up! Look down! Look out! *Dark Forces* offers a facility available in none of its rivals, as yet – your head moves!

Heretic

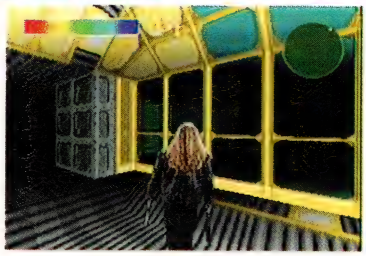


Since their first outing with the superb *Shadowcaster*, Raven Software seem to have lost their way slightly. *CyClones* was definitely a step in the right direction but *Heretic* seems to be a case of treading water. As with *Shadowcaster*, Raven have once again licensed the 3-D engine from iD Software and plastered the walls with Dungeons & Dragons-style texture maps. Instead of the chainsaw, pistol and chain gun, you get to carry power gauntlets, crossbows and dragon claws, but the latter weapons seem to do much the same as the former, as it happens. For me, the best feature of *Heretic* is its level design. Huge castle-like towers, spiral staircases and wooden beams combine to make one hell of a 3-D modelling feast. There isn't much of a plot hidden behind the action (not that this really matters) and progress is often repetitive. If *Heretic* had included more of an adventure element I think it would have been a fabulous game. As it stands, it's merely a good one.

Raven Software
Shareware – retail price TBA
Minimum system: 386SX, 4Mb RAM, VGA
Supports all major sound cards, mouse, joystick

Virtuoso

Virtuoso is a sort of rock opera cum shoot'-em-up featuring a long-haired rock dude in a quest to escape a virtual reality world gone mad. The risible story concerns a high-flying rock star who creates his own VR world in an attempt to rid himself of all the hassles of everyday life. Inside this world he becomes a gun-toting hero with a lust for enemy blood. Viewed in the third person (ie the viewpoint floats above and behind the rocker), *Virtuoso* is a case of simply blasting



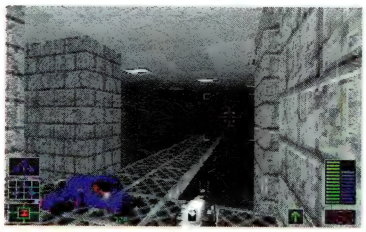
away the ill-defined baddies, picking up the various power-ups and finding the exit... just like virtually every other game here, in fact. *Virtuoso* is significantly lacking in the presentation department including everything from the texture maps to the appalling sprites (snowmen?) – the VR-related plot seems to have been an excuse to stick any old thing in there. There are plus points though; the game has a decent rock soundtrack and the gameplay is solid enough – it's just a pity that the general game idea never quite came off.

The lead singer of Megadeth paused for a moment, concerned. Someone was watching him... but from where?

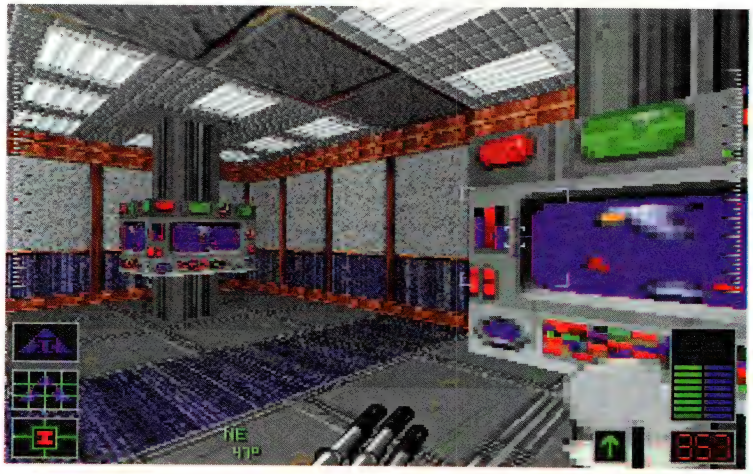
Virtuoso
£39.99
Minimum system: 486SX 33, 4Mb RAM, VGA, CD-ROM drive
Supports all major sound cards, mouse, joystick

CyClones

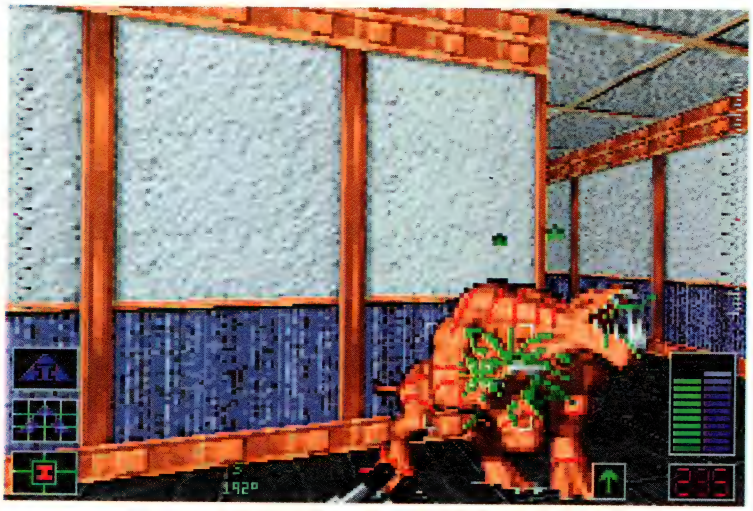
On first inspection, the Raven Software-developed *CyClones* looks and feels like some second-rate *Doom* clone. It is not until you familiarise yourself with the complex controls and delve into the dark recesses of the game that you realise how engrossing and original *CyClones* really is. As a deadly Cybernetic Clone you have been sent out to fight against an alien race attempting to take over the world. At



first, the darkened 3-D corridors seem sparse as you move your mouse around the screen looking for



targets, but as you discover the more adventure-led subtleties of the game, the 3-D environment literally opens up, with complex architecture and surprises lurking around every corner. The game is divided into missions on which you are briefed before entering the battleground. Each mission is then subdivided and interwoven into the story and final mission objective. This fact, coupled with the exciting gameplay, makes for an engrossing and tense experience.



SSI/Mindscape
£44.99
Minimum system: 486SX 33, 4Mb RAM, VGA, 20Mb hard drive space, mouse
Supports all major sound cards joystick

Conclusions

Presentation

My money is placed firmly (and safely) on *Doom II* as far as presentation goes. Although the cut scenes and stills are pretty gaudy (check out the hideous end sequence), the rest of the game is more or less faultless. iD have really taken a great deal of care over the lighting effects and grunts, growls and groans of the on-screen monsters. I still think that the sprites aren't animated as well as they could be, but that isn't a problem in the heat of the action.

Of all the games featured here, *CyClones*, *Virtuoso* and *Heretic* have relatively jerky 3D engines. I'm surprised that *Heretic* isn't even as smooth as the original *Doom*! Despite this drop in frame rate, *Heretic* definitely supplies top quality goods in the sound FX department and this makes a big difference overall. *Virtuoso* is just plain rough-looking throughout the entire game. The sprites are overly blocky and ill-defined, the main character walks as though he's 'chewing a toffee' and the walls, floors and lighting effects just aren't up to it. *CyClones* could have looked a lot better too. The graphics and sound are fine on the whole – it's just a pity that, even on a 486DX-66, the 3-D engine doesn't run as smoothly as it should.

With *Dark Forces*, the *Star Wars* interest elevates what could have been a dull-looking game into a formidable opponent. The recognisable landscapes are smooth to run down, but jerk slightly when panning left and right. Also, of all the games here, *Dark Forces* is the only one to offer an on-screen map overlaid on the 3-D sections.

Doom II	★★★★★
Dark Forces	★★★★
CyClones	★★★
Heretic	★★★
Virtuoso	★★

Atmosphere

When the cheesy snowmen start running towards you in *Virtuoso*, you know something's not quite right. The main problem I have with the game is the inane storyline – a virtual reality world in which a rock star can escape is about as far-fetched as you can get without being arrested. The levels in *Virtuoso* differ tremendously throughout the game and there is little sense of continuity. Sure, the game does have light sourcing and diminishing, but it's not particularly well done.

Doom II, on the other hand, is a stunner atmospherically. Walk into a room and it plunges into darkness, the hiss of nearby monsters sending tingles down your spine. Games of this sort are pretty tense anyway (you should have seen Jon Pyle jump as a quadruped beast leapt out from behind a door while playing *CyClones!)*, but *Doom II* is a genuinely frightening game to play. The sound effects in *Doom II* are spot-on, but they aren't quite as unnerving as the ones heard in *Heretic*. Echoing laughs, the unusual grunts and growls and dying cries do the game a huge justice.

Despite the overly-lit environment in *Dark Forces* (there seems to be a lot of fluorescent lighting, as you would expect), the sound effects and music really bring the game to life. There are some excellent cut sequences too – like Vader bollocking his troops, for example.

CyClones isn't perfect, but I loved the way the laser bolts light up the rooms as they streak past you. It certainly is atmospheric.

Doom II	★★★★★
Dark Forces	★★★★
CyClones	★★★
Heretic	★★★★
Virtuoso	★

Playability

Doom II and *Heretic* offer link-up play, sending playability levels through the roof – especially with four players blasting each other in a Deathmatch game! The link-up can be achieved in a number of different ways; by linking two machines up via a serial cable or over a network. On a network, up to four players can play Co-operative (as a team) or Deathmatch (hunt each other down) – either way, the experience is incredible. *Heretic*, because it uses more or less the same code as *Doom*, allows the same sort of head-to-head play described above.

CyClones, *Virtuoso* and *Dark Forces* are one player games only. All of them would definitely have benefited from a connection option, but I never really found it a detriment. *CyClones* works well as a one player game because the plot, and the way it dictates the action, is pretty good.

Most of the games featured in this month's Power Test are fairly repetitive by design, but *Virtuoso* is just plain dull – the strategies used in games such as *Doom II*, *Dark Forces*, *Heretic* and *CyClones* aren't really employed in Elite's 3-D blaster.

Dark Forces is excellent to play. The smooth graphics and *Star Wars* embellishments add a great deal of fun to the hectic action. As I mentioned earlier, the look up and down option is a refreshing, although this does tend to cause panic and confusion – especially if you're attacked by something you can't see because you're watching your feet!

Doom II	★★★★★
Dark Forces	★★★★
CyClones	★★★
Heretic	★★★
Virtuoso	★

3-D models

The corridors of *Virtuoso* appear flat, narrow and dull in comparison to every other game in this month's test. I can't recall the presence of stairs to ascend/descend and multi-layered levels are very much non-existent. What were the programmers thinking of?

It's difficult to split the other four titles apart in this category. *CyClones* does tend to lose itself every now and then in a maze-like haze, especially when you enter the alien spaceship at the end of the first mission. *Dark Forces*, on the other hand, gives a perfect balance of complex building blocks and sliding platforms. Many of the levels are three or four storeys deep and constant lift use ensures that you never know exactly what is round the next corner. The ability to look up and down is useful in gauging size and scale, and sniping Stormtroopers from high-up platforms adds an extra dimension to the gameplay.

The 3-D models in *Heretic* and *Doom II* give an extraordinary sense of size and scale – especially the former with its massive stone towers. *Doom II* is as complex as it gets, as you would expect from the 3-D modelling masters, iD. There are tons of secret rooms hidden within entwining stairwells and criss-crossing corridors; there's even an outdoor level with Imps strafing your every move. If you hug the walls and keep out of the open, you're on the right track.

Doom II	★★★★★
Dark Forces	★★★★
CyClones	★★★
Heretic	★★★★★
Virtuoso	★

Conclusion

Shall I start at the top or at the bottom this month? Bottom. *Virtuoso* – nuff said.

Heretic, I like – only because of the excellent 3-D models. To be honest, if it wasn't for the winding passages and towering castles, it would have gone in the bin. As it is, it's a lot of fun to explore the nooks and crannies of this mediaeval free-for-all.

At first, *CyClones* appeared rather dull in comparison to some of the other games here. In Steve Hill's words, "you start by rummaging through a battered old shed and not much else", but it does get a lot better the further into the game you play. As the plot is split wide open and the primary goals are met, the game expands into something more than just a shoot'-em up. The mouse control is a nice touch, one that adds a fair degree of originality to the method of play.

Aided by the well-established *Star Wars* universe, *Dark Forces* is as big a hit as it deserves to be. Although not as atmospheric as *Doom II*, *Dark Forces* is still a tense gaming experience – one that is backed-up with outstanding visuals and superb sound effects.

But in the end, there is absolutely no doubt as to the outcome of this Power Test – *Doom II* is the game with the biggest sawn-off and baddest attitude. It would not be unfair to say that, at the moment, iD's masterpiece is the most immersive, gripping, exciting and challenging game available for the PC. Excelling its famous predecessor in many areas, *Doom II* has set a precedent that other PC shoot'-em-ups will find hard to follow.

3-D Shoot-'em-ups

Doom II	96%
Dark Forces	89%
CyClones	87%
Heretic	80%
Virtuoso	68%

Power A-Z

ISSUE 1 JANUARY 1994

Alien Breed
Team 17: Shoot-'em-up (77%)
Fast moving and enjoyable overhead alien blaster.

Archer Maclean's Pool
Virgin: Sports (90%) Platinum award
The ultimate pool game from a true master.

Indycar Racing
Virgin: Driving (92%) Platinum award
Legendary, thrilling and almost as good as *F1GP*. A stunner, but a bit dated now.

Innocent Until Caught
Psygnosis: Adventure (82%)
Half decent point and click Sci-Fi affair.

Jurassic Park
Ocean: Adventure (65%)
Boring and jerky film conversion.

Litil Divil
Gremlin: Adventure/puzzle (91%) Platinum award
Glorious *Dragon's Lair* type romp which tickled our fancy.

Magic Boy
Empire: Puzzle/platform (79%)
Enjoyable but short-lived puzzle game for kids.

Microcosm
Psygnosis: Shoot-'em-up (76%)
If only the gameplay matched the ground-breaking visuals.

Nick Faldo's Golf
Grandslam: Sports (80%)
One of the best golf games on the PC at the moment.

Rally
Europress Software: Driving (78%)
A serious attempt to convert very difficult subject matter. Not bad.

Shadow Caster
Origin/EA: Adventure (75%)
Great graphics, but not a good *Doom* clone and a poor RPG.

Speed Racer
Accolade: Driving (30%)
Useless pile of cartoon cack.

Striker
Elite: Sports (42%)
Shoddy shadow of the console version. Stick with *FIFA*.

Subwar 2050
MicroProse: Simulation (88%)
The best attempt at a sub game so far and it's actually fun to play too!

ISSUE 2 FEBRUARY 1994

Alone in the Dark 2
Infogrames: Adventure (82%)
Tough, but worthy sequel with even better graphics. Maze is annoying, though.

Blues Brothers, The
Titus: Platform (63%)
Simple game with very little going for it apart from a cool reputation.

Companions of Xanth
Accolade: RPG (80%)
Well drawn RPG with good characterisation and neat plot twists.

Flight Sim Toolkit
Domark: Construction kit (81%)
Remarkably in-depth and sometimes daunting kit which is nonetheless perfect for all serious flight sim fans.

Fury of the Furries
Mindscape: Puzzle (79%)
Fun and mildly amusing game in the *Lemmings* mould. Nice intros.

Goblins 3
Sierra: Puzzle (70%)
Simple and often engrossing puzzle game lacking in the magic of its predecessors.

Hand of Fate: Legend of Kyrandia II
Virgin: Adventure (89%)
One of the better (older) adventures, now replaced by the excellent ptIII.

Hired Guns
Psygnosis: RPG (81%)
Decent enough futuristic *Dungeon Master* replicant.

Jack the Ripper
Mirage: Adventure (32%)
Intriguing plot, but bugger all else. A dog, even if you've read 'The Final Solution'.

Leisure Suit Larry 6
Sierra: Adventure (75%)
Colourful and funny point 'n click adventure, but there are many better out there.

Masters of Orion
MicroProse: Strategy (70%)
A massive and involved space strategy game with lots of possibilities.

Rebel Assault CD
US Gold: Shoot-'em-up (91%) Platinum award
Action-packed *Star Wars* game which looks and plays like a dream.

Ryder Cup Golf
Ocean: Sports (84%)
Well presented and reasonably priced all-round golf game.

Sam and Max
US Gold: Adventure (83%)
Fantastically funny LucasArts adventure like *Day of the Tentacle*. Top.

Sid & Al's Incredible Toons
Sierra: Puzzle (79%)
Crazy puzzle game with zany characters and tons of challenge.

Silverball
Team 17: Simulation (65%)
Poorly designed pinball game which isn't as good as *Dreams* or *Fantasies*.

Spellcasting Party Pak
Accolade: Adventure (80%)
Three saucy text adventure games including naked pics of nubile girls. Great!

ISSUE 3 MARCH 1994

Campaign II
Empire: Strategy/war (84%)
One of the most difficult and in-depth battle simulations ever devised. If you like 'em, get it.

Gabriel Knight
Sierra: Adventure (89%)
Atmospheric and brutal New Orleans cop drama that is something special.

Lawnmower Man CD
Sales Curve: Adventure (86%)
A half decent multi game conversion of the two film scripts.

Operation Desert Storm
Digital Integration: Sim (81%)
Well programmed and comprehensive tank game.

Pinball Fantasies
21st Century: Sim (80%)
The sequel to *Pinball Dreams*, with four new tables and some corking new effects and whistles.

Police Quest: Open Season
Sierra: Adventure (72%)
A good attempt at an interactive cop movie that is too restricted and contains very little action.

Premier Manager 2
Gremlin: Sports (88%)
The best football management game on the PC.

Reunion
Grandslam: Adventure/strategy (81%)
A very able space *Civilisation*-type game that is fun to play and long lasting.

Unnecessary Roughness
Accolade: Sports (80%)
Apparently the best American football on the PC. I still hate them, though.

Quest for Glory IV
Sierra: Adventure (89%)
A captivating graphical adventure that is perfect for RPG novices.

Warrior Prince
G&M Software: Adventure (50%)
An awful game that is really showing its age.

ISSUE 4 APRIL 1994

Archon Ultra
US Gold: Puzzle (80%)
Well programmed chess-like fantasy war game which improves on Archon.

Cannon Fodder
Virgin: Shoot-'em-up (94%) Platinum award
Brutal, bloody, sadistic and damn good fun. *CF* is one of the best games ever!

Daemonsgate
Gametek: RPG (71%)
Able and complex RPG which goes a little too deep for most people. Serious fans only.

Evasive Action
Mindscape: Flight sim (89%)
Fly anything from bi-planes to spaceships in this excellent flight sim.

Genesia
Mindscape: Adventure (88%)
Enjoyable *Populous*-style game which takes a while to get into, but is worth the wait.

Megarace
Mindscape: Driving (55%)
Handling in this terrible game is woeful and even the great graphics don't make this a silk purse.

Micro Machines
Codemasters: Driving (56%)
Too simplistic and childish for the PC really. A colourful game with limited long term appeal.

Mortal Kombat
Virgin: Beat-'em-up (87%)
Still one of the best one-on-one fighting games on the PC. No blood, though.

NFL Pro League Football
Digital Integration: Sports (64%)
Another sad attempt to convert American football to the PC. Not enough off the pitch management.

Nomad
Gametek: Strategy/adventure (72%)
A space adventure which is eclipsed by Gametek's fabulous *Frontier*. Not that bad, but it does get repetitive.

Rock 'n Roll Decades, The CD
Supervision: Multimedia (80%)
A sound attempt to create a true multimedia conversion of the *Rock 'n Roll Years*. But where's the 60s, 70s and 80s?

Sim City 2000
Maxis: Sim (94%) Platinum award
They've improved on the original with better graphics and even more statistics. One of the best.

ISSUE 5 MAY 1994

Airforce Commander
Impressions: Strategy (52%)
This game centres on the air supremacy aspect of warfare. Good detail, but bad presentation.

Airlines
Interactivision: Strategy/sim (62%)
You are the commander of an entire airline. Why not try and cause the biggest crash? Too technical.

Award Winners
Empire: Compilation (88%)
Four great games in one. *Elite* (yeah!), *Sensible Soccer* (Yeah!), *Jimmy White's* (not bad) and *Zool* (Bleuch!).Good value.

Fantastic Dizzy
Codemasters: Platform (81%)
A fun, but too cute platform romp which will appeal to younger players. Adults beware.

Kevin Keegan's Player Manager
Imagineer: Sports (55%)
A lack of management elements and a rubbish control system on the pitch makes this a dud for our Kev.

Sabre Team
Krisalis: Strategy (90%) Platinum award
An involving and violent strategy game based on a team of SAS commandos. Highly playable.

Seawolf
EA: Strategy/sim (83%)
Definitely one of the better sub games, featuring good combat and some neat film clips.

Starlord
MicroProse: Shoot-'em-up (67%)
Good looking, but simple and repetitive space game that holds few surprises.

Star Trek 25th Anniversary
Interplay: Adventure (75%)
Trekkies will love the attention to detail but in truth this game is too short and has shabby graphics.

The Elder Scrolls: Arena
US Gold: RPG (86%)
An astounding first RPG from Bethesda with multiple missions and a vast long term challenge.

Who Shot Johnny Rock?
American Laser Games: Shoot-'em-up (59%)
Bad collision detection ruins what could otherwise have been a top notch coin-op conversion.

Wizard!
Psygnosis: RPG (61%)
Another *Doom* perspective RPG which adds nothing new to the genre. Combat is very poor.

ISSUE 6 JUNE 1994

Animation Workshop (Hanna Barbera)
Empire: Multimedia (88%)
A fun paint and animation package that allows you to create your own *Scooby Doo* cartoons. Zoinks!

Blue & the Gray, The
Impressions: Strategy/war (65%)
Advanced strategy game about the American Civil War. A bit too complicated to be enjoyable.

Carriers at War II
EA: Strategy/sim (69%)
The depth of research in this navy sim is admirable, pity the game is slow and lacking in excitement.

Delta V
US Gold: Shoot-'em-up (91%) Platinum award
Breath-taking graphics complement a lightning fast blasting game that shines above the rest.

Fleet Defender
MicroProse: Sim (85%)
A solid no-nonsense carrier-based flight sim that is now overshadowed by *US Navy Fighters*.

Hell Cab
Time Warner: Adventure (80%)
A strange time travelling adventure which drops you off in hell and New York. What's the difference?

In Extremis
US Gold: RPG/adventure (85%)
Doom inspired space adventure with tons of atmosphere. *System Shock* is better, though.

Myst
EA: Adventure (91%) Platinum award
A haunting and beautiful SVGA graphic adventure. One of the best on the PC.

Ravenloft
US Gold: RPG (70%)
One for dedicated AD&D fans only. Well presented, but nothing special.

Red Hell
Cyberdreams: Adventure (67%)
Cool name, but a duff game from the producers of the excellent *Dark Seed*. Acting is terrible.

UFO: Enemy Unknown
MicroProse: Adventure/RPG (86%)
You are the head of XComm and your mission is to uncover and eliminate any alien invaders. Simply an excellent game.

Ultima VIII
EA: RPG (82%)
The master of the genre is back with another stunner. Not the best of the series.

Wolfenstein 3-D
ID Software: Shoot-'em-up (85%)
The prequel to *Doom* and crammed full of gore, Nazis and stupid hats. A good blast, but *Doom* is better.

ISSUE 7 JULY 1994

Aegis: Guardian of the Fleet
Time Warner: Sim (80%)
Competent and remarkably complex navy sim which unfortunately doesn't utilise the CD's vast storage space.

Brutal Football
Millennium: Sports (53%)
Another tosh American football game. Why do they bother?

Corridor 7
Gametek: Shoot-'em-up (70%)
Better graphics than *Doom* but nowhere near the playability.

Detroit
Impressions: Sim (72%)
Highly original simulation about the car business in the USA. Comprehensive, but soon gets repetitive.

Dragon's Lair CD
Elite: Adventure (70%)
The old classic laser disk game pops up again. Great graphics but an annoying control method.

Empire Soccer '94
Empire: Sports (85%)
Second only to *FIFA* as the best and most accurate football game.

European Champions
Ocean: Sports (69%)
An uninspiring footy game with base graphics and nothing special up its sleeve.

The Horde
US Gold: Adventure (85%)
Quirky seems to be the general consensus of opinion on this one. A good mix of action and adventure.

Pacific Strike
EA: Flight sim (90%) Platinum award
An amazing WW2 sim that has astounding graphics and plays well too. A top buy.

Sam & Max CD
US Gold: Adventure (83%)
A classic point & click adventure now on CD. One of the best and nearing *Day of the Tentacle* territory.

Space Hulk CD
EA: Strategy/adventure (90%)
An excellent example of a claustrophobic maze adventure that really works. Fun for all the family.

Spaceship Warlock CD
UBI Soft: Adventure (67%)
A *Blade Runner* rip-off with some of the worst acting we've ever seen.

Summer/Winter Challenge
Accolade: Sports (72%)
A dire and jerky Olympic sim with minimal playability. The two games on offer show their age badly.

ISSUE 8 AUGUST 1994

Al Qadim
US Gold: Adventure (84%)
A thoroughly enjoyable and very pretty adventure in a world of magic and mystery. Puzzles are weak, though.

Companions of Xanth CD
Accolade: RPG (82%)
Sad acting and the worst puns we've ever seen, but nonetheless a good solid RPG.

Cool Spot
Virgin: Platform (81%)
Cartoony platform game which is fairly playable, but repetitive. Dave Perry's early work.

D-Day
Impressions: Strategy (65%)
Accurate, but too complex and slow rendition of the events in Normandy.

Litil Divil CD
Gremlin: Puzzle/ adventure (79%)
Funny and pretty graphic adventure in the *Dragon's Lair* mould.

Lost Files of Sherlock Holmes CD
EA: Adventure (60%)
Wish they had been...

Overlord
Virgin: Flight sim (80%)
One of the most impressive WW2 games out. Good graphics are complemented by a top notch flight engine.

Pinball Dreams 2
21st Century: Sim (79%)
Four new tables and more pinballing than you can handle. If you hate pinball, this won't convert you however.

Robinson's Requiem
Daze Marketing: RPG (51%)
A visually stunning Sci-Fi adventure lacking in the gameplay department.

Simon the Sorcerer CD
Adveturesoft: Adventure (94%) Platinum award
A cutesy style point & click adventure with a good line in humour. Chris Barrie does the voice over.

Theme Park
EA: Sim (89%)
Brilliantly playable and funny theme park builder with a nice rendered intro for the kids.

Wargame Construction Set II: Tanks
US Gold: Strategy (48%)
Incredibly bland and boring tank game with no redeeming features.

World Cup USA '94
US Gold: Sports (88%)
Despite the crap licence, this is a well programmed and slickly presented footy game with style.

Zool 2
Gremlin: Platform (80%)
Colourful and cartoony platform game with limited appeal for serious players. Not bad.

ISSUE 9 SEPTEMBER 1994

1942 Pacific Air War
MicroProse: Flight sim (94%) Platinum award
Without doubt the best WW2 flight sim around. Great graphics, realistic gameplay and tons of missions.

Beneath a Steel Sky CD
Virgin: Adventure (88%)
Evocative and atmospheric *Blade Runner*-esque adventure. Great character development and art by Dave Gibbons.

FIFA Soccer
EA: Sports (86%)
A top notch conversion of the console hit. Extraordinarily clear graphics and full voice commentary.

Grandest Fleet, The
Millennium: Strategy (79%)
Bare bones strategy game where you command a fleet of ships. Two player is good, though.

Harpoon II
Accolade: Sim (70%)
For seasoned navy warfare veterans only. Highly detailed and involved sim that arcade freaks will hate.

Isle of the Dead
Merit Software: Adventure/beat-'em-up (76%)
A very basic looking Friday the 13th horror film with *Doom*-esque action sequences.

Outpost CD
Sierra: Sim (86%)
A highly enjoyable and playable *Populous*-type strategy game in space.

Privateer CD
EA: Shoot-'em-up/strategy (59%)
Dated and pale imitation of *WC3* that doesn't improve now that it's on CD.

Shadow of the Comet CD
Infogrames: Adventure (68%)
Not a bad adaptation of the HP Lovecraft tale, remarkable because you get a free mouse mat.

Soccer Kid
Krisalis: Platform (79%)
Dated and repetitive platform game where you control a kid who uses a football as a weapon.

TIE Fighter
Virgin: Shoot-'em-up (95%) Platinum award
The best blasting game so far on the PC. True to the films, fast, frantic and with amazing 3-D graphics.

ISSUE 10 OCTOBER 1994

Battle Bugs
Sierra: Sim/strategy (85%)
An unusual blend of fighting and planning in the ant world. Worth a look as competition to *Sim Ant*.

Dark Legions
US Gold: RPG/strategy (73%)
Quite fun, but too expensive and simple mystical strategy game. There are plenty of others.

Desert Strike
Gremlin: Shoot-'em-up (85%)
The game that sold a million is finally on the PC and it ain't half bad. Isometric chopper game.

Heimdall 2
Core: Adventure (82%)
Abandoning the original format, this is a colourful isometric adventure which is fun to play right to the end.

Ishar 3
Daze Marketing: RPG (76%)
A good intro to RPGs, this is the latest in the Ishar series, but it isn't quite as good as *Elder Scrolls*.

King's Quest CD
Sierra: Adventure (85%)
A compilation of the *KQ* series which is both good value and absorbing. A must for fans.

Manchester United PLC
Krisalis: Sports (80%)
Another attempt to beat *Sensible Soccer*. Poor graphics and sound ruin it.

Pinball Dreams Deluxe CD
21st Century: Sim (70%)
A good buy if you haven't got the original, this features 3-D table intros and terrific music.

Planet Soccer
Infogrames: Sports (52%)
A brave attempt to marry good graphics with wild camera angles. It fails on the playability front.

Psychotron CD
Merit Software: Adventure (65%)
Sad attempt at an early interactive movie. As usual the acting is B-movie and the plot is non-existent.

Superhero League of Hoboken
Accolade: RPG (83%)
The review said "If you're into mutation, you'll love this." Yeeeessss! As Jeremy Paxman would say.

Wing Commander Armada
EA: Shoot-'em-up (88%)
A worthy addition to the series, but try *WC3* instead.

ISSUE 11 NOVEMBER 1994

Brian Lara's Cricket
Audiogenic: Sports (70%)
One of the most famous cricketers of recent times puts his name to an only average sports sim.

Doom II
ID Software: Shoot-'em-up (95%)
Platinum award
Budda budda! Ba-Dam! This is the ultimate gore-fest. Superb one player and unbeatable death match.

Dreamweb
Empire: Adventure (80%)
Despite being too restricted and linear, this is nonetheless an impressive and playable game.

Fritz Chess
Playtime: Sim (80%)
Don't even bother with this unless you're a grand master. It beat Kasperov y'know.

Inferno CD
Ocean: Shoot-'em-up (86%)
It looks fab and plays smoothly once you've got the hang of the controls. Nice film sequences too.

Rise of the Robots
Mirage: Beat-'em-up (32%)
I don't care what PC Power gave this originally, it's crap and no-one should buy it.

Return to Ringworld CD
Time Warner: Adventure (68%)
A fair game on the CD, but it could have been so much better if the game design was improved.

Star Crusader CD
Gametek: Shoot-'em-up (81%)
When you're dealing with space shoot-'em-ups you better be good. This isn't as fun as *Inferno* or *TIE Fighter*.

Ultimate Domain CD
Mindscape: Strategy (88%)
A polished and playable *Populous* clone that captivates and enthrals. That means it's good, by the way.

ISSUE 12 DECEMBER 1994

Aces of the Deep
Sierra: Simulation (80%)
Well rounded and playable WW2 U-boat sim from Dynamix.

Alien Legacy
Sierra: Strategy (68%)
Too structured and not as good as *Outpost*.

Alone in the Dark 2 CD
Infogrames: Adventure (89%)
Controversial but ultimately better sequel to *Alone in the Dark*.

Bloodnet CD
MicroProse: Adventure (81%)
Vampire terror and plenty of moody stills, but a convoluted plot.

Colonisation
MicroProse: Simulation (90%)
Platinum award.
Fabulous sequel to *Civilisation* and another hit for Sid Meier. Underrated at the time, but I love it!

Dark Sun: Wake of the Raveger CD
Mindscape: RPG (85%)
One of the best AD&D games on the market today. Plenty of adventure and dark dungeons to explore.

Ecstatica CD
Psygnosis: Adventure (87%)
Stunning graphics, but slow, jerky and can sometimes be a bit difficult to pla. It's still a ground-breaker, though.

Klik & Play
Europress Software: Utility (90%)
Platinum award
Write your own games with this excellent Windows game creator. Great fun if you have the time.

Little Big Adventure CD
Electronic Arts: Adventure (95%)
Platinum award
Breath taking French isometric adventure which is quite simply the best on the PC today. Get it now!

Lords of the Realm
Impressions: Simulation (84%)
Be lord of the manor with this medieval sheep-fest – sadly no torture peasants option, though.

Magic Carpet CD
Electronic Arts: Shoot-'em-up (92%)
Platinum award
Smooth and unbelievably slick carpet blaster that turns convention on its head.

Micro Machines
Codemasters: Driving (61%)
Legendary overhead racing game with terrific two player mode, but boring singularly. Could've been a contender.

Microsoft Space Sim
Microsoft: Simulation (80%)
Technically accurate, but sometimes plodding and laborious. Good missions and spacecraft but for enthusiasts only.

Novastorm CD
Psygnosis: Shoot-'em-up (78%)
Pretty visuals, but a standard action game that wouldn't look out of place on the Mega-CD.

Quarantine CD
Gametek: Shoot-'em-up (86%)
Basically *Doom* in a taxi and none the worse for that. Action packed and wrapped in gory cyberpunk graphics.

System Shock CD
Electronic Arts: Adventure (94%)
Platinum award
I don't agree with the old PC POWER rating, so here's a new one. Classic claustrophobic *Alien*-esque space adventure. Unmissable!

Transport Tycoon
MicroProse: Simulation (90%)
Platinum award
Railroad Tycoon is but a memory as this superb sim blows it away. Well worth the money.

US Navy Fighters CD
Electronic Arts: Simulation (96%)
Platinum award
The best modern day flight sim around. Hot SVGA graphics, but jerky on anything lower than a Pentium.

Warcraft
Interplay: Strategy (78%)
Bare bones AD&D war game with some in-depth manoeuvres and functional graphics.

ISSUE 13 JANUARY 1995

All New World of Lemmings
Psygnosis: Strategy (79%)
New and improved with SVGA visuals and new skills, but you can't beat the simplicity of the original.

Armoured Fist
US Gold: Simulation (84%)
Basically just *Commanche* on the ground, but the in game graphics aren't half as nice as the intro ones.

Creature Shock
Virgin: Shoot-'em-up (79%)
A game for late nights, boot it up and get lost in the catacombs with loads of psychotic aliens.

Cyberwar
SCI: Strategy/Shoot-'em-up (65%)
Loads of fancy graphics in the *Lawnmower Man* vein, but not a lot of fun to play.

Dawn Patrol
Empire: Simulation (81%)
Styled like an interactive novel, this game is a realistic portrayal of WWI air battles. SVGA is fabbo, but it is very tough.

Dragon Lore
Mindscape: Adventure (88%)
Fascinating and well scripted adventure game with more lush pics than Liz Hurley.

EarthSeige
Sierra: Shoot-'em-up (72%)
Big robots, big guns, not big fun.

Kyrandia III CD
Virgin: Adventure (70%)
A highly visual and taxing game, but Dino didn't seem to like it.

Lode Runner
Sierra: Platform/puzzle (86%)
The C64 classic returns for some nifty platform action that just doesn't date. Still a good laugh.

NASCAR Racing
Virgin: Driving (85%)
Almost identical to *Indycar*, *NASCAR* looks amazing (esp in SVGA for those that can afford it) but is too hard to play.

Noctropolis CD
Electronic Arts: Adventure (83%)
A full-on gothic vampire tale with ship-loads of dusky maidens and plenty of blood-sucking. Our kind of game!

Rally Championship
Flair: Driving (84%)
Powerdrive pretender to the throne with plenty of good graphics and an adequate game engine.

Retribution
Gremlin Interactive: Shoot-'em-up (80%)
Nothing out of place here, but a little too simplistic for sustained play.

Under a Killing Moon CD
US Gold: Adventure (90%) Platinum award
Totally interactive Philip Marlow-type adventure with tons of moody settings. Some hate it, most love it.

Universe
Core Design: Adventure (68%)
Not bad looking Sci-Fi sleuth-'em-up with some nice touches, but not enough of them.

Virtuoso CD
Elite: Shoot-'em-up (52%)
Pale and insignificant Doom clone which has a rock star as a central character. Weak.

Zork Anthology CD
Activision: RPG (80%)
Four classic text only adventure games from yesteryear.

ISSUE 14 FEBRUARY 1995

Aladdin
Virgin: Platform (71%)
Glitzy Disney platform game of the film. Not bad, but not suited to the PC. For the kids.

Alien Logic CD
Mindscape: Adventure/RPG (80%)
A good RPG that will appeal to many people, especially those who've grown tired of AD&D games.

Cannon Fodder 2
Virgin: Shoot-'em-up (80%)
Same old blood 'n guts, but this time with even more all-new levels. Not *that* big an improvement.

Commander Blood CD
Mindscape: Adventure (86%)
An intriguing sequel to the ancient *Captain Blood* (with music by Jean Michelle Jarre don't y'know).

Football Pro '95
Sierra: Sports (78%)
Yet another tosh American Football game. Yawn.

Frankenstein
Merit Studios: Platform (45%)
Childish pile of tosh that shouldn't have ever been converted.

Freddy Pharkas CD
Sierra: Adventure (78%)
A fair update of the floppy game which has an entirely new soundtrack and full speech added.

Hell CD
Gametek: Adventure (92%) Platinum award
Dark and bloody 18 rated adventure that seems quite good. .

Journeyman Project Turbo CD
US Gold: Adventure (64%)
CD update of the ageing adventure game from Presto.

King's Quest VII CD
Sierra: Adventure (92%) Platinum award
An interactive fairy tale which is perfect for all ages and talents. Top.

Lion King
Virgin: Platform (84%)
More Disney related japes in this okay-ish conversion of the console hit.

Menzoberranzan CD
Mindscape: RPG (86%)
A truly inspirational and evocative adventure game with fab graphics and effects.

On the Ball: World Cup Edition
Daze Marketing: Sports (79%)
A footy management game with few frills.

Panzer General CD
Mindscape: Strategy (83%)
Unusually this is a very easy game to play and perfect for beginners. It's about tanks by the way.

PowerDrive
US Gold: Driving (70%)
A poor attempt to convert rallying to the PC. Terrible controls and too hard.

Project X
Team 17: Shoot-'em-up (80%)
A standard shoot-'em-up with little plot and the same old Amiga looking sprites.

Shadows of Darkness CD
Sierra: Adventure (86%)
The CD version of the adventure game has loads of great new voices from Hollywood.

Sim City 2000 CD
Maxis: Sim (94%) Platinum award
The CD version of this classic has the Great Disasters disk included and is quite simply brilliant.

Voyeur CD
Interplay: Adventure (70%)
Sad attempt at an interactive movie with some saucy bits. Can't wait for the hard core version.

Wing Commander III CD
EA: Shoot-'em-up/adventure (95%) Platinum award
The epic mini movie is on four CDs and is the *WC* fan's nirvana. Simply brilliant!

ISSUE 15 MARCH 1995

Alone in the Dark 3
Infogrames: Adventure (91%) Platinum award
Best of the *Alone* series to date, with Carnby battling zombie cowboys on a haunted film set.

BreakThru!
MicroProse: Puzzle (80%)
Mr Tetris strikes again, but can't match the addictive immediacy of the original.

Combat Classics 3
Empire: Compliation (76%)
Mixed bag of militaria: *Gunship 2000*, *Campaign* and *Historyline*. Let down by *Campaign*.

Cyberia
Interplay: Shoot-'em-up (71%)
Exquisitely rendered, but ultimately teeeeeedious, action-adventure.

Defender of the Empire
Virgin: Shoot-'em-up (80%)
Expansion disk for *TIE Fighter*. A few new ships and missions, but no gameplay changes.

Iron Assault
Virgin: Shoot-'em-up (68%)
Ho-hum *Doom* clone (gasp) with a giant robot-esque atmosphere.

Ka-50 Hokum
Virgin: Flight sim (91%) Platinum award
High-class helicopter havoc. Battle against modern-day pirates in the South China Seas.

Legions
Mindscape: Strategy (61%)
Tedious Windows-based wargame set in Roman times.

Metal Marines
Mindscape: Strategy (81%)
Windows conversion of the simplistic Super NES wargame. Crawls along, even on a P60.

Premier Manager 3
Gremlin: Sports sim (89%)
Excellent football management simulation. Do we not like that?

Space Federation
Interplay: Strategy (55%%)
Yawnsome celestial empire-building.

Superski Pro CD
Mindscape: Skiing sim (38%)
Horrid 'simulation' of various winter sports. It's rubbish!

Wings of Glory CD
EA/Origin: Flight sim (89%)
WW1 aerial antics as you take to the skies in various rickety cabbage crates.

Woodruff & the Schnibble of Azimuth
Sierra: Adventure (87%)
Stupid title, but a highly playable point 'n' click adventure.

X-Wing Collector's Edition CD
Virgin: Shoot-'em-up (92%) Platinum award
Graphically enhanced compilation of *X-Wing*, *Imperial Pursuit* and *B-Wing*. Unmissable!

HIGHEST RATED GAME
US Navy Fighters – 96%
Issue 12

LOWEST RATED GAME
Speed Racer – 30%
Issue 1

The Butt Stops Here

I write this in the midst of the most shocking dose of flu I've ever had. You know the type; your eyeballs hurt when you move them, your jaw hangs limply and you look like a Neanderthal, and of course copious amounts of rainbow coloured substances suddenly, for no apparent reason, shoot out just when you are about ask out that really horny girl from accounts.

Nevertheless, my convalescence did give me the chance to actually play the choice cuts of PC gaming. With a sturdy box containing *X-Wing CD*, *Doom 2*, *US Navy Fighters*, *Discworld*, *Inferno*, *NASCAR* and of course the Z80 Spectrum Emulator, I was set for the duration.

However, when faced with playing games all day (no I don't usually, if that's what you're going to ask), it soon became apparent that there are really only a few key gameplay elements that make a truly stunning game. So, with joystick in hand, I decided to try and define what qualities make a great game.

First off, there have to be plenty of things to do. If you aren't constantly being tested by the minions in the game then boredom can set in and there's nothing worse than endlessly roaming samey corridors searching for that elusive switch. If there is to be vast exploration, you must keep the player on guard at all times by having plenty of secret traps and enemies who re-appear just when you think the area's safe.

For me, *Starquake* on the ZX Spectrum is the finest example of this. Yes there are tons of rooms to explore and yes they are very similar (just with different patterns on the wall), but because every time you re-enter a room the monsters re-materialise, you are never safe from extermination.

Also, the added usage of constantly fluctuating energy bars means you are always on the lookout for power-ups as well as the prime mission objective. *Doom* is the same, as you must always conserve your resources throughout a level or risk facing the end-of-level Marsellus with no bullets.

Some games do of course ignore the constant attack rule, such as *Colonisation*, *Sim City 2000* and *Elite*, but the thrill of not knowing when something life-threatening will happen maintains the high adrenaline levels.

The control method is the next important thing. Keys must be in the right place (or redefinable), and the response time between finger presses must always be instant, or at the very least, predictable. Many games falter here; you tap the left button, only to walk two paces instead of one and plummet off the edge of a cliff. *Another World* was guilty of this, although *Flashback* did improve on it. A good test of the perfect keyboard layout is imitation. Think how many *Doom* clones use the same buttons – virtually all of them.

Graphics are always important, but not paramount. Too many games these days look wonderful, but play hideously, such as *Hell*, *Cyberia* and *Cyberwar*. Games like *Thrust* in the early Eighties proved that graphics can be successfully sacrificed for gameplay, but I do agree that games like *Doom* need the smart visuals to remain atmospheric.

With the power of PCs being used to greater and greater effect, the games are looking more impressive, but the important thing is that the gameplay should be sorted first, and the graphics added later, not the other way round.

The last real aspect of a good game is the fun factor. How enjoyable is it to play? *Doom* may be great in one player mode, but the deathmatch is simply superb. Someone made the decision to include that, and I want to shake them by the hand. Multi-player games are always more fun if you have a few like-minded mates and it is this added dimension that will make a game last forever. Think of *Dynablaster* – it was a hit on the PC Engine and it's never gone away.

What I'm trying to say this month is that slowly but surely there are some classic games emerging for the PC, far more than on any other games medium. The Saturn can keep *Daytona*, and the Sony Playstation *Ridge Racer*, because for all their flashy looks, they can't hope to match the depth of PC games, and that's why more and more people are turning to the PC as their number one leisure machine. I certainly did.

Hope you enjoy the mag.

Damian Butt

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ACTION REPLAY V 4.0

FREEZE POWER!

JUST IMAGINE THE POWER TO FREEZE ANY PROGRAM AT THE PRESS OF A BUTTON

Manipulate the frozen program and create special effects within games such as infinite lives, unlimited energy, special moves etc. Grab pictures, Music, hack programs and more!

FREE SUBSCIPTION TO ACTION LINE BBS!

CD COMPATIBLE CD

£69.99 inc VAT

INFINITE CHEAT GENERATOR

Action Replay now has FOUR powerful CHEAT FINDER modes that actually scan through the game in its FROZEN STATE and finds the locations that control lives, ammo, objects etc. etc. The unique CHEAT GENERATOR then gives you a cheat code for that game. Simply press key to restart the game and you are invincible!! Cheats can be saved to disk or entered again at a later date. Loads of ready made cheats are also supplied on disk. Very powerful - even CD titles.

PROGRAM SAVE

Freeze your program at any point and save entire contents of memory, including extended memory, to floppy or hardrive. When you reload the program it will resume at the point it was frozen. Ideal for saving a game at a difficult point or for programs with tedious password' loading systems.

NEW SCREEN GRABBER

At the press of the **Action Replay** freezer button you can grab a VGA screen from any program and save it out as a standard PCX file suitable for your graphics package. Now works with many non standard VGA, SUPER VGA and TEXT modes.

EVEN PROTECTED MODE PROGRAMS

Action Replay V 4.0 now works with protected mode programs including DOOM™, DOOM II™, UFO etc. in fact all DOS 4GW games and more. Lots of protected mode utilities!

THOUSANDS OF READY MADE CHEATS!

Action Replay V 4.0 is also supplied with literally thousands of ready made cheats for all the latest block busters.

SLO MO FUNCTION

Allows you to play a game at your own pace - about 10% to full speed.

MUSIC GRABBER

Now searches through memory for music in the Sound Tracker format. Save to disk and play back through one of players included with Action Replay. Ideal for creating your own demos

SOUND RIPPER

Scans through memory for sound blaster sound samples. Save to disk as .voc and .wav formats. Edit and playback. Ideal for Windows effects. Very effective, works with most programs.. even CD games!!

MONITOR FEATURE

Display the entire contents of memory in its frozen state. View as HEX or disassembly, includes a memory search facility which now works with all DOS memory. Output to printer available.

HACKER FUNCTIONS

Interrupt monitor displays contents of interrupt vectors and can monitor the activity of a particular interrupt. Register command shows where the program was when it was frozen. Graphics register command displays the contents of the VGA register set. The hackers dream!

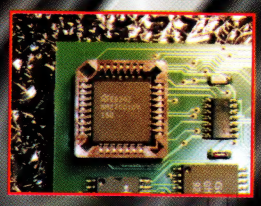
ADVANCED USER MODE

New feature now allows the user to write powerful programs that use the advanced **Action Replay** operating system so TSRs take up NO system memory. Powerful virus scanner searches for viruses and alerts the user if detected. Now recognises even more viruses

The power to bust your programs wide open!

System requirements 386/486 DOS 3.2 and above

Custom hand held control - Freezer button & Slo-Mo enable available at all times.



UNLIMITED FREE UPGRADES

ACTION REPLAY V 4.0 features on board FLASH ROM which means that it can be upgraded easily by the user from disk or online from the ACTION REPLAY BBS... absolutely FREE!

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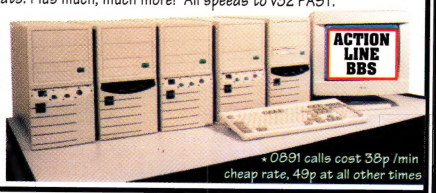


*0891 calls cost 38p /min cheap rate, 49p at all other times

WHAT THE REVIEWERS SAY

"PC Action Replay is a sophisticated, multi-talented piece of equipment with more options than you can throw a stick at....beautifully simple to use." **PC POWER JAN. '94**

"The PC version is the best yet, combining powerful code crunching with lethal game busting" **VIDEO GAME SHOPPER**

"Action Replay is the keenest peripheral I've bought sonce my CD ROM drive. Well worth the dollar for any serious PC gamer." **WIRED OCT. '94**

"Action Replay is well worth considering.. It won't be long before everyone has one". **PC POWER NOV. '94**

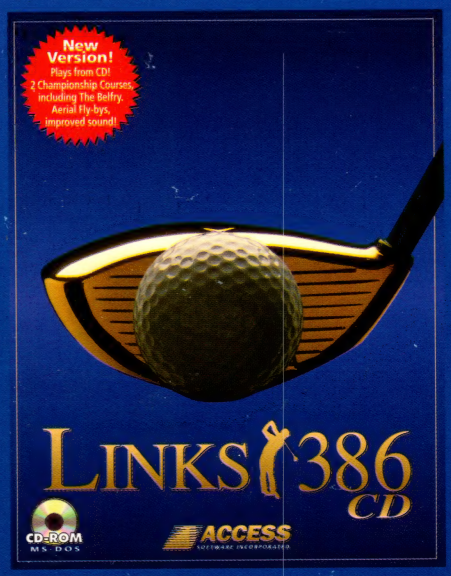
' THE PERFECT DRIVE '

The perfect golf simulation deserves the perfect PC platform. Now the most award winning golf game in software history has been enhanced for CD.

The Belfry ~ Harbour Town

The new Links 386 CD features Harbour Town Golf Links as well as The Ryder Cup venue, The Belfry.

Links 386 CD includes an entirely new digital sound system and simulated aerial fly-bys of each hole, allowing you to assess the challenge from the air. All other Links Championship Courses are playable with Links 386 CD, creating a complete golfing experience.



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Minimum Requirements: 386sx IBM PC, 4MB RAM, 16MB Hard drive space, Double speed CD-ROM drive, MS-DOS 3.1, SVGA monitor, Mouse, Sound Card recommended.

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